EXCLUSIVE: Kelvin Fletcher Q&A

Soapstar superstar: Strictly Come Dancing winner explains how he takes his racing very seriously ***p14***

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Portuguese Grand Prix winner knows he will be in a fight to retain World title

LEWIS: THIS WILL BE MY TOUGHEST SEASON YET

Champion staved off his main rivals

Hamilton took his second 2021 win

By Matt James

Lewis Hamilton has predicted that the battle for this year's Formula 1 World championship will go down to the wire after snatching his second victory of the season on Sunday.

The Mercedes man was forced to fight through the order to win the Portuguese Grand Prix at Portimao and overtook team-mate Valtteri Bottas and Red Bull-Honda star Max Verstappen along the way.

The victory means the reigning title holder is eight points clear of Verstappen in the standings, but Hamilton thinks that the dogfight between the top drivers will last until the end of the season in Abu Dhabi in December.

Hamilton said he was delighted with his 97th career win.

"It's a much different feeling of course when you are battling so closely with two great drivers. So yeah, it feels fantastic," said the 36-year-old. "As you can see I think it is a great fight between Mercedes and Red Bull and I'm sure also down the field and we will be pushing each other right to the last race."

Full story, page 4

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT MOTORSPORT NEWS

PREVIEW

THE GRAND PRIX BATTLES ON THE UK'S HILLS

Looking ahead to the British Hillclimb Championship ***p18***

INSIGHT

WHO WILL RULE THE ROOST IN THE 2021 BTCC?

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COMMENT

Photo: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images, Paul Lawrence, Hal Ridge

Hamilton had to work hard to earn his second victory of the 2021 Formula 1 season

THE BATTLE WE ALL WANTED

Formula 1 delivered another compelling race in Portugal last weekend, but it was a very different type of contest than we had been served up in the opening two races of the season. It might not have provided the corner-by-corner thrills that Imola did, for example, but it certainly had fans on the edge of their seats throughout.

It was one of those grands prix that relied heavily on having the perfect strategy as much as it did on having a particularly heavy right foot. The chess match was enthralling, as was Lewis Hamilton's mastery of all that was in front of him. This might not go down as one of his most memorable victories, but it is these types of grand prix where the Briton is able to exercise his art at its finest.

A long, long way into the race, the TV cameras were able to capture the top three in the race in a single shot. That hasn't been the case for a long while and that is something that all fans of the discipline should relish. This will be a great season and will ebb and flow as different circuits suit the differing abilities of each chassis. It would take a brave person to nail their colours to any drivers' mast when determining who is the likely favourite for the title. That is what makes the rest of the season such an exciting prospect.

Elsewhere in Motorsport News this week, our Q&A guest is Kelvin Fletcher. The housewife's favourite isn't merely a star name dabbling at motorsport. His passion is clear in his answers to Graham Keilloh as is his vision for a long-term future in the discipline. The interview starts on page 14.

Fletcher is looking ahead, and so are we. Paul Lawrence is our guide to the forthcoming British Hillclimb Championship, which pitches some superbly talented drivers against each other in some truly mouth-watering machines.

Hal Ridge is your guide looking ahead to the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross contest, which gets underway this weekend at the spiritual home of rallycross, Lydden Hill in Kent.

Also blasting into life this weekend is the eagerly-awaited British Touring Car Championship. The 29 entrants will have a baptism of fire at the super-fast Thruxton circuit, and we look at the five stars who are ready to write the headlines. To find out how all of these battles are resolved, don't forget to pick up Motorsport News next week.

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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RACING NEWS

CHAMPION HAMILTON REIGNS SUPREME IN TENSE PORTUGUESE GRAND PRIX

Mercedes man delighted with his charge back to the front in the Algarve

Photos: Motorsport Images

By Matt James

Lewis Hamilton says he was "on the limit" to battle his way back into the lead of the Portuguese Grand Prix in Sunday after slipping to third place early on.

The Briton's 97th career Formula 1 win was made more difficult when he was jumped at an early restart by Max Verstappen's Red Bull-Honda, which pushed the World champion down to third spot. He responded by repassing the Dutchman when the Red Bull man made a tiny mistake.

Hamilton then tracked down race leader and team-mate Valtteri Bottas pulled a move at Turn 1 to secure prime slot. Hamilton was further helped when the pitstops played out as Bottas slithered wide and allowed Verstappen back up to second spot. That secured the order for the rostrum.

Hamilton said: "That was such a tough race, physically and mentally, keeping everything together.

"I didn't quite get as good a start as Valtteri and then lost out at the restart which was not good. I think Max made a mistake at some point and that was perfect. With Valtteri I had to make the move early on before the tyres were destroyed and I just managed to get him at Turn 1. [It was] right on my limit. [A] great race."

The victory means that Hamilton has an eight-point gap at the head of the championship table.

Verstappen, who stopped for fresh tyres, had set a fastest lap late on in the race to try and earn an extra point, but it was later stripped as he had strayed over track limits to record the benchmark time. Bottas, who had also stopped to bolt on new Pirellis, eventually claimed the extra mark. Behind the top three, Sergio Perez put in a mammoth opening stint but fell away at the end to claim fourth ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Results

1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1h34m31.421s; 2 Max Verstappen (Red Bull-Honda) +29.148s; 3 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes); 4 Sergio Perez (Red Bull-Honda); 5 Lando Norris (McLaren-Mercedes); 6 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); 7 Esteban Ocon (Alpine); 8 Fernando Alonso (Alpine); 9 Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren-Mercedes); 10 Pierre Gasly (AlphaTauri-Honda). **Championship:** 1 Hamilton 69; 2 Verstappen 61; 3 Norris 37; 4 Bottas 32; 5 Leclerc 28; 6 Perez 22. **Next race:** Spanish Grand Prix, May 9.

CREES AND BTC RACING PART WAYS FOR 2021

Reigning British Touring Car Championship Jack Sears Trophy holder Michael Crees has parted ways with the BTC Racing squad on the eve of the opening rounds of the championship at Thruxton this weekend.

In a brief statement, the Brackley-based team, which will field Honda Civic Type Rs for Jade Edwards and Josh Cook this term, said that the partnership was over and it was looking for a substitute driver to take over the controls of the Japanese machine.

Crees joined the BTCC in 2019 at the wheel of a Team Hard VW CC, before moving to BTC Racing last term. As well as collecting the Jack Sears Trophy, which is held for drivers who had not previously scored a podium at the start of the season, he finished 12th in the chase for the Independents Trophy and took a best overall finish of ninth place.

BTC Racing boss Steve Dudman said: "On behalf of everyone at BTC Racing, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Michael for his participation with the team in the British Touring Car Championship. It's a shame the partnership isn't continuing, but we wish him well in his future endeavours."

Crees: out of a ride for 2021

Silverstone will host the first of the new events

POINTS WILL BE ON OFFER FOR F1'S NEW SPRINT EVENTS

Further details have emerged about how the new sprint events added to the 2021 Formula 1 schedule will work, with points being awarded to the podium finishers.

The three extra events will take place at Silverstone and Monza with the third expected to be at Interlagos, though the Brazil track is not yet confirmed as part of the plan.

The winner of what has been dubbed 'sprint qualifying' will get three World championship points, the second-placed driver will earn two marks and one is on offer for third spot.

The race weekends will change when the extra events are planned. Friday's opening practice will take place as normal, and then the qualifying will take place on Friday afternoon. There have been tweaks to the tyre allocations too to cover the sprint qualifying sessions.

F1 president Stefano Domenicali said the plan was "testament to our united efforts to continue to engage our fans in new ways while ensuring we remain committed to the heritage and meritocracy of our sport".

The move has been approved by teams, which will have a restructured financial deal to acknowledge the extra mileage and any potential damage incurred.

It is now expected to be signed off by the World Motor Sport Council.

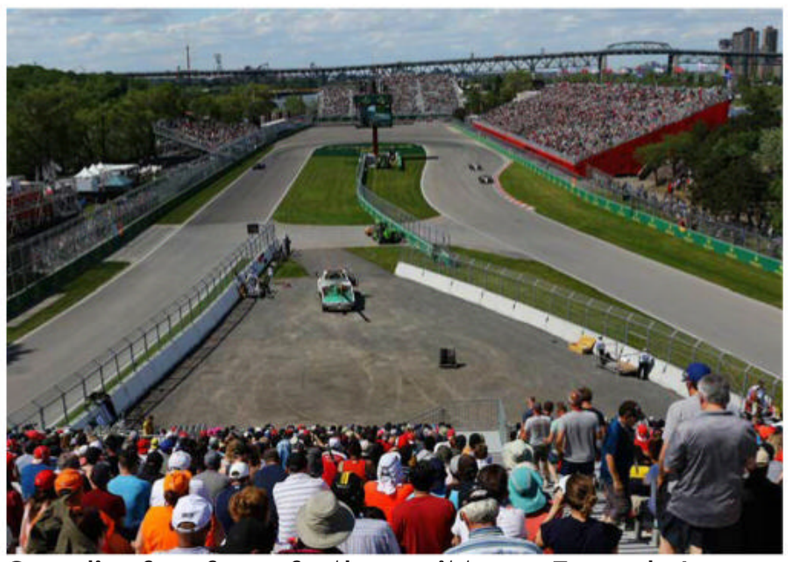
TURKEY STEPS UP FOR F1 AGAIN AS CANADA IS BINNED

The Turkish Grand Prix will return to the Formula 1 schedule this year as the Canadian Grand Prix has been axed due to the global health pandemic.

The race at Istanbul Park, which was welcomed back onto the F1 roster last season for the first time since 2011 amid the cancelled grands prix, is due to take over what would have been the Montreal slot on June 11-13.

Travel restrictions in Canada require a 14-day quarantine which mean the grand prix has been axed for a second season in a row. It's deal to host the grand prix has been extended by those two years through to 2031.

F1 president Stefano Domenicali said: "While it is disappointing we cannot be in Canada this season, we are excited to confirm that Turkey will host a grand prix in 2021 after an amazing race last season. I want to thank the promoter and authorities in Canada for all of their efforts in recent weeks but the travel situation made our plans impossible."



Canadian fans face a further wait to see Formula 1 cars

There is still some uncertainty about the likelihood of a Japanese Grand Prix, with the government in the Far Eastern country recently imposing emergency measures in two of the country's major cities. Australia, Singapore and Brazil are also under the spotlight.

TOYOTA MAKES HARD WORK OF ITS MAIDEN HYPERCAR WIN AT SPA

Toyota took victory in the first race of the World Endurance Championship's new Hypercar era at Spa in Belgium last weekend, although it faced a tough battle to claim the honours from the only other contender in the division.

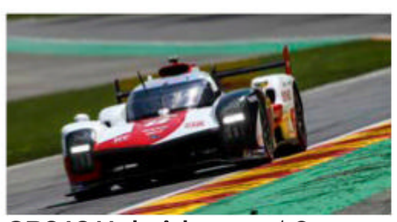
The two new GR010 Hybrids locked out the front row, but an error by Kamui Kobayashi meant the car he shared with Jose Maria Lopez and Mike Conway was delayed. That handed the initiative to the sister machine of Sebastien Buemi, Brendon Hartley and Kazuki Nakajima, which itself had to battle to overcome a penalty for a pitstop infraction.

They nevertheless finished over a minute clear of the Alpine A480-Gibson of Nicolas Lapierre, Andre Negro and Matthieu Vaxiviere.

Filipe Albuquerque, Phil Hanson and Fabio Scherer crewed the LMP2-winning United Autosports Oreca while French star Kevin Estre and Neel Jani shared GTE Pro spoils for Porsche. In the GTE Am division, the AF Corse Ferrari line-up of Nicklas Nielsen, Francois Perrodo and Alessio Rovera prevailed.

The event had been held amid controversy over the pace of the LMP2 cars, which pushed the top division machines hard and Toyota has called for a rethink on the pace of the various classes.

● Briton Oliver Gavin, who finished fourth in the GTE Pro division for Corvette Racing in the C8.R machine at Spa alongside Antonio Garcia, has announced his immediate retirement from driving.



GR010 Hybrid won at Spa

Photo: Adam Beresford, Darren Cook Scruffy Bear Pictures, Jakob Ebrey

Moss was frequent Goodwood participant

Moss celebrated at 2021 events

LEGEND MOSS TO BE CELEBRATED AT 2021'S GOODWOOD EVENTS

This year's Goodwood Festival of Speed, Revival and Members' Meeting will commemorate life and career of late Sir Stirling Moss with races, parade and cars

By Graham Keilloh

The legendary Sir Stirling Moss will be commemorated at Goodwood's headline motorsport events in 2021.

Moss, who passed away last year, was one of the founding Festival of Speed patrons and a regular Goodwood event attendee, coming to be known as 'Mr Goodwood'. Moss took part in, and won, his very first motor race on the Goodwood circuit on September 18 1948, a day after his 19th birthday, and contested 56 Goodwood races, winning 21.

The Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR in which Moss and co-driver Denis Jenkinson won the 1955 Mille Miglia will be on display at the Festival in a rare venture outside of the Mercedes Museum in Stuttgart.

The Stirling Moss Memorial Trophy, formerly the Kinrara Trophy, will have its second running as a permanent Revival fixture, and the September 17-19 event will also for a daily track parade host one of the largest collections of Moss's cars.

The 78th Members' Meeting, on October 16-17, will include the third running of the Moss Trophy for pre-1963 GT cars.

The Duke of Richmond said: "Stirling and his wife Susie were such an important part of the Goodwood family for so many years. All of us here felt his loss especially keenly as we weren't able to commemorate his incredible life as we would have wanted last year."

Also five current Formula 1 teams are so far confirmed to attend this year's Festival: McLaren, Mercedes, Red Bull, Ferrari and Williams.

Khera (c) and Wylie (r) make British GT return in Lambo

CHAMPIONS WYLIE AND KHERA PAIR UP IN BRITISH GT LAMBO GT3 ATTACK

British GT4 champion Ross Wylie and reigning Ferrari Challenge UK champion Lucky Khera will pair for a full-time British GT3 assault this year in a Simon Green Motorsport Lamborghini.

The experienced team with Wylie and Khera made a one-off appearance in British GT's GTC class at Silverstone last season, and has now upgraded to a Huracan GT3. The Silver-Am driver pair have also partnered in GT Cup.

The British GT season-opener will be 2014 GT4 champion Wylie's first British GT3 outing since 2016. He said: "Last year's one-off at Silverstone gave Lucky a taste of what he could expect, and from that moment on it was evident he wanted to be involved one way or another this season! The plan has always been to make the step up to GT3 where we can test ourselves against the established order.

Khera added: "Switching full-time to a series with endurance at its heart feels like a natural next step in my motorsport career, and there's nowhere better for that in the UK than British GT."

Team boss Simon Green noted: "This is a big move for us but one we've been building towards for some time. It will be a very proud moment."

IN BRIEF

Mick Nicholls RIP

Motorsport News was sad to learn that Toyota MR2 stalwart Mick Nicholls passed away last month aged 71 after becoming unwell during a Cadwell Park test day. The MR2 championship paid tribute to Nicholls, who raced alongside son Stuart and daughter Maxine, stating: "He made many friendships that reached far beyond the confines of the paddock. A larger-than-life character."

Rising stars

Reigning British Formula 4 champion Luke Browning, FIA Formula 2 frontrunner Liam Lawson, plus British GT stars James Baldwin, Patrick Kibble, Gus Burton and Sam Neary, have been confirmed as the latest recruits to the British Racing Drivers' Club's Rising Star scheme for promising pilots aged 24 and under.

Enduro endurance

Enduro Motorsport will compete in the full 2021 British GT season with a GT3 Pro-Am pairing of Morgan Tillbrook and 2011 GT4 champion Marcus Clutton. The team, founded last year, intended to make race-by-race appearances with the Mercedes-AMG GT4 it races in GT Cup, but has escalated plans after acquiring Balfe Motorsport's British GT race-winning McLaren 720S.

CityCar support

The entry-level CityCar Cup will race on the British GT championship's support bill at its Donington Park meeting over the July 10-11 weekend. This replaces CityCar Cup's cancelled October Silverstone meeting, therefore retaining its full calendar for its first full season. The organising British Racing and Sports Car Club added that full CityCar Cup grids are expected this year.

Hibbert's hope

Tom Hibbert has a Ginetta GT4 Supercup title aim as he returns this season with Rob Boston Racing. Hibbert has been a consistent Supercup frontrunner since his 2015 debut and he finished third in the standings in both of the last two seasons. He said: "Last year we headed into the business end of the season in title contention and I'll be looking to do the same again."

Malin makes it two

Richardson Racing is expanding to a two-car Porsche Carrera Cup GB programme this year with Ginetta GT5 Challenge and Mazda MaX 5 champion Josh Malin. Malin joined Richardson in 2019 as he graduated into the GT5 Challenge, and clinched the title dramatically last year. Richardson made its Carrera Cup debut last season.

TEAM BRIT SET FOR BRITISH GT MOVE AS IT NEARS LE MANS

Team Brit is set to race in British GT in 2022 as the team moves a step from its goal of becoming the first ever all-disabled team to race in the Le Mans 24 Hours.

The squad, which currently competes in Britcar, plans to race a McLaren 570S GT4 in next year's British GT championship with its Britcar pilots 21-year-old Bobby Trundley, who was diagnosed with severe autism as a child, and 30-year-old Aaron Morgan, who is a paraplegic after breaking his back in a motocross accident.

Team founder Dave Player said: "To now be ready to move on to the British GT championship is testament to the incredible hard work of the team, our sponsors and our drivers. Racing in a McLaren will be an incredible privilege and Bobby and Aaron have made such progress over the past year."

Britcar pair Trundley (l) and Morgan set for step up

FORES GETS BRITISH F3 SEASON-OPENER CHANCE

Ex-club racer Alex Fores has inked a deal to compete in BRDC British Formula 3's season opener with Chris Dittmann Racing on Brands Hatch's Grand Prix circuit later this month.

Fores, who last year graduated from club competition to BRDC F3 via F3 Cup, impressed in a recent two-day Silverstone GP test alongside an FIA Formula 3 driver. Fores also gets a Brands GP test on May 13.

Fores, 21, told Motorsport News: "How Silverstone went was a big factor for Dave Bromfield [Fores's backer], to see me matching this FIA F3 driver and be competitive on times throughout the whole grid, you just thought 'have to get out for the first race' otherwise we'd be thinking 'what if?' Silverstone is what's made this happen so hopefully same can happen at Brands, then who knows?

"[Doing the full season] has always been Plan A. The deciding factor, we all know what that is! All I can do is use every opportunity to the max."

Fores: hopes for backing

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RACING NEWS

TITLE CONTENDER HEDLEY RELIEVED AS HE JOINS BRITISH F4 GRID WITH FORTEC

Hedley assumes position as a British F4 title favourite with a late deal to race for 2020 champion team

By Graham Keilloh

British Formula 4 frontrunner James Hedley has expressed relief after confirming a deal for his second year racing in the category, switching to reigning champion Fortec Motorsport for 2021.

The 17-year-old from Poole is the highest-placed from last year's British F4 table to return this year, him placing fifth with JHR Developments in a campaign that included a hat-trick of wins in the Thruxton meeting.

His initial '21 deal covers the first three rounds of the season, but Hedley is hopeful of completing the campaign and considers himself among the title favourites. The season-opener is this weekend at Thruxton.

Hedley has participated in pre-season tests with the Fortec team that took Luke Browning to 2020's drivers' title, though only confirmed his race deal last week.

"It's a weight off my shoulders to have got a deal signed for the first three," Hedley told Motorsport News, "[there's] more motivation and excitement [now] it's 100% and we can crack on."

Hedley added that Fortec offered a package that he was very grateful for, and without which he wouldn't be racing.

"[Fortec] are a great team, they won it last year, they wanted me more than any other team did. The package that they can provide is excellent," he added.

"I don't want to do anything and not win it, so you've got to go up the ladder and try and win everything you can."

Photo: Jakob Ebrey, Porsche GB

Hedley placed fifth in last year's British F4 standings

TOCA SUPPORTS 2021 PREVIEW

Twice champion and BTCC star Dan Cammish is back

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB AND PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE GB

Porsche Carrera Cup GB is anticipated with particular relish this year, as two-time champion Dan Cammish returns from the BTCC frontline, with the Redline Racing team that he took his pair of Carrera Cup titles with.

And he'll take on prodigious 20-year-old Porsche Junior Harry King of Team Parker Racing who dominated the contest on debut last year.

It's not just about them either, as they'll be joined by 18-year-old British Formula 4 champion Kiern Jewiss, who joins King at Team Parker. While Valluga Racing's Lewis Plato is another familiar frontrunning returnee, the Carrera Cup GB race winner having sat out 2020.

Will Martin of Richardson Racing and Lorcan Hanafin of JTR are among the contest's promising up-and-comers. There are also Pro-Am and Am contests to keep an eye on.

All eight Carrera Cup GB rounds support the British Touring Car Championship, with the two remaining Thruxton meetings supported by Cayman-based Porsche Sprint Challenge GB that enters its second season, with Theo Edgerton and Ethan Hawkey among the exciting returnees.

GINETTA JUNIORS, GT5 CHALLENGE, G40 CUP, GT4 SUPERCUP AND GTA

There will as ever be plenty of Ginetta action at TOCA meetings in 2021, with the Ginetta Juniors, GT5 Challenge and G40 Cup racing at Thruxton this weekend. The GT4 Supercup starts at next month's Snetterton meeting while the entry-level GT Academy and its new G55 appears on the package later this year.

Ginetta Junior returnees include Josh Miller who won 2020's finale and Seb Hopkins who finished fifth in the points. While, among the rookies, scholarship winners Robert de Haan and Maurice Henry are worth a look.

The GT5 Challenge field has a fresh look, though 2021 podium finishers, Conner Garlick and John Bennett, remain as does treble fourth-place-finisher Magnus Kriklywi. And at Thruxton there'll be a familiar face in Max Coates competing with Breakell Racing.

Junior winner Miller back

Last year's GT4 Supercup top two have decamped to British GT, to become Century team-mates, though 2020's third-place standings finisher Tom Hibbert returns with Rob Boston Racing and fourth-place man Adam Smalley's back with Elite too.

MINI CHALLENGE – THE JCW AND COOPER CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Mini Challenge enters its second season supporting the British Touring Car Championship with the JCW contest appearing at seven TOCA rounds and the Coopers at the remaining three.

The Cooper class has a capacity 36-car entry signed up and its 2021 campaign kicked off at Snetterton last month with returning champion Matt Hammond of Excler8 and Graves Motorsport's Lee Pearce sharing the wins.

Mini Challenge's JCW championship gets its campaign underway next month at BTCC's Snetterton meeting. While reigning champion Nathan Harrison has moved to the Porsche Carrera Cup, last year's narrow runner-up Dan Zelos is back with Excelr8 and is aiming for the title. He's joined at the team by the similarly title-hungry 20-year-old Max Bird who last year with Elite won three races.

Zelos: hunting JCW title

Teenage charger Isaac Smith has moved from Excelr8 to JWB Motorsport and promises a "full charge for the championship", while long-time Clio Cup frontrunner Max Coates, decamped from Elite to Graves, is another likely contender.

BRANDS HATCH: MSVR BY BRIAN PHILLIPS MAY 1

PROCTORS AND NEARYS GET GT CUP WINS

Stewart and Lewis Proctor in Balfe Motorsport's McLaren 720S scored their first GT Cup victory in an eventful first race when more than 40 cars gathered on the Grand Prix layout for round two of this year's championship.

Front row qualifiers Richard and Sam Neary in their Mercedes and Michael Igoe and Phil Keen's Lamborghini had problems and the racing became a little too physical for others, leaving Lewis Proctor to grab a golden opportunity and take the lead late in race one. The Mercedes had a puncture and a pitstop infringement penalty. At least they finished the race, unlike the Igoe/Keen Huracan that retired with brake problems.

The Phil Quaife/John Dhillon Lamborghini was second and a late charge earned third for Grahame Tilley/Sennan Fielding's Nissan, which was promoted after Leo Machitski's Barwell Huracan was kicked out for driving standards.

Order was restored in race two, dominated by the Neary Mercedes for their fourth win of the year. Adam Balon's solo drive in a Barwell Lamborghini earned second, almost half a minute adrift. He was barely ahead of the recovering Igoe/Keen car on the road but was helped by a five-second penalty applied for a safety car infringement given to Igoe during his charge.

Behind the GT3 frontrunners GTO cars were best of the rest, and class victories were achieved by John Seale/Abbie Eaton in a Huracan and Richard Chamberlain's Porsche 935, an early race one retirement.

Almost 80 Caterhams contested four close 7 Race Series encounters and Simon Clark's Cayman was a double Porsche Club Championship winner, helped by red flag countback in a curtailed second outing.

Photos: Gary Hawkins

Proctors in McLaren (36) took first GT Cup win

RACE WINNERS

GT Cup Championship
Race 1: Stewart Proctor/Lewis Proctor (McLaren 720S GT3)
Race 2: Richard Neary/Sam Neary (Mercedes AMG GT3)

Porsche Club Championship
Races 1&2: Simon Clark (Cayman S)

7 Race Series, 420R
Races 1&2: Ian Payne

7 Race Series, 1600/270R
Race 1: David Yates
Race 2: Jay McCormack

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RALLY NEWS

HYBRID RULES ARE ON TRACK, SAYS MATTON

There will be no delay to the introduction of the hybrid-based Rally1 regulations in the World Rally Championship, according to the man at the top of rallying.

Yves Matton, who heads up governing body the FIA's rally department, was speaking following last month's Croatia Rally, which got underway shortly after hybrid kit supplier Compact Dynamics recalled selected components when a fault was discovered.

The Rally1 formula is set to be rolled out for the 2022 season but the parts recall led to suggestions that a 12-month delay might be called for. However, Matton has insisted that would not be the case and that the new regulations are on target.

"Of course, any new product that is being developed encounters challenges," the Belgian said.

"We are working as one to complete tasks that are synonymous with a development cycle of this nature. At present, we are operating an accelerated process due to delivery delays brought about by the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic but with eight months remaining to the start of the 2022 season, we are on course."

Matton: confident for '22

Photos: M-Sport. mcklein-imagedatabase.com

M-Sport is pleased with its early Rally1 running

M-SPORT READY TO HIT THE GROUND RUNNING WITH RALLY1 MILEAGE

British team eager to embrace new formula and could switch from the Fiesta model

By Graham Lister

M-Sport was preparing to embark on the next step of its Rally1 testing programme when Motorsport News went to press last week.

Following running in the UK in "all weather conditions", M-Sport is due to head to Europe for the next phase of its 2022 research and development.

The announcement comes amid continued speculation about the identity of the base car M-Sport will use for its Rally1 effort.

Although a Ford Fiesta WRC has been used as a test mule so far, M-Sport team chief Richard Millener admitted talks with Ford regarding car choice are ongoing.

"You can expect a surprise at some point but I don't know what the surprise will be and I don't know when it will be," Millener told reporters during the Croatia Rally. "To be honest there are still some discussions internally [on] what's best. But I am sure as we start to test outside the UK in the coming months some photos will appear."

On the subject of delays caused by the hybrid kit recall (*see story, left*), Millener said: "We should be sensible and expect there will be more setbacks. To expect Compact Dynamics to provide a faultless unit at their first attempt at rally is a tall order. There have been some problems, but there's no point getting too stressed about it. Everybody is in the same boat and we've got to deal with it. It's the team that can deal with it in the best manner that [will] come out on top."

Testing work has been done in a Ford Fiesta mule car

FOURMAUX RETAINS PLACE IN TOP-FLIGHT FORD FIESTA WRC FOR PORTUGAL

Points for Fourmaux in Croatia have led to second shot

Adrien Fourmaux's Croatia Rally heroics have been rewarded with a second World Rally Car outing in Portugal later this month.

Frenchman Fourmaux, 26, was promoted from M-Sport's WRC2 squad to its lead WRC team for last month's sealed-surface counter in Zagreb for what was his first World Rally Car outing on a WRC event.

He finished fifth alongside co-driver Renaud Jamoul, setting a brace of top-two stage times in the process.

Confirming his continued presence in M-Sport's top team alongside Briton Gus Greensmith, Richard Millener said: "We were extremely pleased with Adrien's performance, he surpassed his own expectations. Four years ago he hadn't even driven a rally car, and now he's challenging and, at times, outperforming the guys he grew up watching and idolising.

"He has a natural talent and ability that we're keen to develop, and I'm pleased to confirm that he will return to the Fiesta WRC in Portugal. Discovering the power and performance of the top-specification Fiesta on gravel, this will be a different challenge and he's under no pressure – but we're all looking forward to seeing how he performs."

Millener also confirmed that Finn Teemu Suninen, who swapped places with Fourmaux in Croatia, will continue in WRC2 in Portugal in a Fiesta Rally2 before he swaps back with Fourmaux for Rally Italy.

Suninen finished second on the Sardinia round in 2019 and led after the opening stage last season. Swede Tom Kristensson is set to contest both events with M-Sport in WRC2.

SORDO REJOINS HYUNDAI FOR RALLY PORTUGAL

Dani Sordo will replace Craig Breen in Hyundai's factory WRC line-up in Portugal.

The move, which had been expected as part of the Spaniard's car-sharing programme with Breen, will hand Sordo his first World start since January's Monte Carlo Rally and his first alongside new co-driver Borja Rozada.

Sordo is an expert on the stages around the Fafe region, where part of Rally Portugal is based and won the Portuguese championship Rallye Serras de Fafe in 2019.

Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak complete the works Hyundai entry in Portugal with Oliver Solberg and Ole Christian Veiby driving for its WRC2 squad.

BREEN TO MAKE EMOTIONAL RETURN TO TARGA FLORIO

Craig Breen will return to the Italian Rally Championship-counting Targa Florio in Sicily this weekend, almost nine years since his co-driver Gareth Roberts was killed on the island event.

Breen and Roberts were contesting what was then a round of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge when they went off the road on the first stage of leg two.

Roberts, from Wales, was killed instantly when an Armco barrier penetrated the front of their Munaretto-run Peugeot 207 S2000.

Breen was uninjured and bravely continued competing with the blessing of the Roberts family. But he's carried an enormous emotional burden since that June day in 2012.

"The fact that I have such a bittersweet feeling about this beautiful island makes me sad," said Breen. "I feel a little piece of my heart was taken away from me by Italy, but I also received so much from a country where I could nearly call home now.

"It's incredible to think it's coming up on nine years since that dreadful day. I think it's clear to say there is not many days that I don't think about Jaffa [Roberts]. He is truly a part of my journey. And now my journey takes me back there, back to the Targa Florio.

"This is my decision, my idea. I want to go back and make nicer memories. I want to try and release the bad thoughts that I have about the island and the rally there.

"I am obviously nervous and a little bit anxious about being back there again, but my plan is to enjoy the rally and try to feel comfortable, I know it's absolutely what Jaffa would have wanted."

Breen, who will compete in a Hyundai i20 R5, is second in the Italian championship to Stefano Albertini after winning Rallye Sanremo last month.

Breen will tackle the famous Targa Florio stages again

EURO TWEAKS MEAN AZORES WILL BE IN OCTOBER

The postponed Azores Rallye is set to take place in October following changes to the European Rally Championship schedule due to be announced this week.

MN understands Rally Hungary is being moved to a new August slot, one week prior to Rally Zlin in Czech Republic, to accommodate the island rally that had been scheduled to run this weekend until it was postponed at the request of the local health authority.

ERC promoter Eurosport Events has confirmed the gravel-based Rally Poland will open the new season from June 18-20.

No other changes are expected.

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RALLY NEWS

Bell will battle in the UK

BELL CHOOSES BRC FOR HIS 2021 CAMPAIGN

Former Junior WRC driver Ruairi Bell will return to the British Rally Championship in 2021, competing for Junior BRC honours in a Ford Fiesta Rally4.

Bell won the M-Sport Fiesta prize in the BRC two years ago that helped him compete in the JWRC but he missed out on the overall junior title. That's something he'd like to avenge as well as gaining more experience behind the wheel.

"It's a fantastic calendar and it's fantastic that they're putting something on during Covid," Bell told MN. "Why not come back and go for this fantastic prize [Hyundai WRC2 drive in 2022] and more importantly get some experience?

"I'm still only 21," Bell added. "While I've gone and done the JWRC which was a fantastic opportunity, it arguably was a bit too early in that I didn't have the experience to really put the pace down. I was learning so much, learning how to rally not how to do WRC events.

"We achieved exactly what we wanted to achieve: we wanted some top five results and a stage win and we got a podium and two stage wins but there's a bigger picture. There's a longer-term goal to be back in the WRC and part of that role definitely relies on more national championship experience."

DATE SWITCH FOR RALLY FINLAND AMID MASS-GATHERING BAN IN THE COUNTRY

Summer deadline means iconic high-speed event shuffles back in the 2021 line-up

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Jakob Ebrey, M-Sport

Finnish fans will be forced to wait

By Graham Lister

Finland's World championship rally will take place on the first weekend of October after organisers responded to a ban on mass gatherings in the country.

The famous gravel event, which is preparing to celebrate its 70th anniversary this year, had been due to run from July 29-August 1.

However, with the Finnish government outlawing spectator events until the summer, Rally Finland organiser AKK Sports received approval from the FIA and WRC Promoter to run the event in the autumn.

Riku Bitter, chairman and CEO of AKK Sports, said: "We could not go ahead with arranging the event with the lack of certainty that members of the public could attend.

"Unlike Arctic Rally Finland, Rally Finland is a made-for-spectators event and we need fans to make it work. Although there is no certainty we will be able to welcome fans in October, we hope the rollout of the vaccination programme will go a long way to making this possible."

By switching to autumn, Rally Finland is going back to its roots: the first edition in 1951, known then as the Jyvaskylan Suurajot, took place in September.

The date change means Belgium's Ypres Rally will host the eighth event of the season.

M-SPORT STAGES EVENT TO RETURN FOR A SECOND YEAR

Greystoke Stages clerk of the course Roger Fisher has outlined the initial plans for the additional Greystoke event that Motorsport News understands will follow a similar format to last year's M-Sport Return to Rally Stages.

The M-Sport Stages, which ran on August 22 last year, was jointly organised by the Greystoke team as well as Malcolm Wilson and M-Sport who use the forest for testing.

The one-off rally was held as a bid to restart rallying in the UK which ultimately stalled due to fresh lockdowns and a bout of increased Covid-19 restrictions.

Last month, Greystoke organisers released a statement explaining that the traditional annual event was being postponed to September 19, 2021 because they had been offered an opportunity to run a second event in the usual summer slot.

Fisher has told MN that the new, as-yet unnamed, event will be held across two days instead of just one and will comprise of around 56 competitive stage miles with the entry capped at 55 because of space restrictions for servicing. But MN also understands that this entry will be reserved for M-Sport-manufactured and Ford cars.

"The basic proposal is we're going to run a two-day event on July 3-4 [and] all the competition will be in Greystoke," Fisher said. "We're looking at probably in the region of 55, 56 miles. If you're familiar with Greystoke forest you'll appreciate that there's not a lot of options with regard to stage routes, but we are coming up with one or two things that are a little bit different which we'll reveal closer to the time."

On the traditional Greystoke Stages, Fisher added: "The event in July will be at Greystoke but a little bit different we hope whereas the event in September should be a fairly typical Greystoke Stages."

The M-Sport-backed event will return to the calendar

The wraps have come off Llewellin's new Mirage R5

LLEWELLIN STEPS UP TO MIRAGE R5 FOR BTRDA AND WELSH ASSAULT

Tom Llewellin, the son of two-time British Rally champion David, will campaign a Mitsubishi Mirage R5 in this year's BTRDA Gold Star series as well as his native Welsh Rally Championship.

Llewellin, who turned 20 last week, has already tested the Mirage at Sweet Lamb as well as Walters Arena on Tuesday as he launched his livery for the year. His first rally will be the Nicky Grist Stages on July 10 as he steps up from a Ford Escort Mk2. Peredur Davies will co-drive.

"It was the next step for me really," Llewellin told MN. "Four-wheel drive, even if it wasn't an R5, was the aim from the Escort. I can't wait to get rallying and get out in it."

The Spencer Sport-built Mirage hasn't proved as popular as several other R5 cars on the market, but has shown flashes of potential – particularly when Tom Cave almost beat Matt Edwards' Ford Fiesta with one on the 2018 Nicky Grist Stages.

Llewellin added: "We feel the car is competitive enough, we feel that it's got what it takes to win rallies. Obviously the first few events I'd love to win but at the end of the day it will be our first time in four-wheel drive so we've got to go through the steps.

"Getting experience is the main thing and then I guess after a few events maybe we can start pushing. Most of the BTRDA clashes with the Welsh anyway so we're going to have a go at both championships."

COMPUTER SCIENCE BOOST FOR ESTONIAN POOM FOR EURO ATTACK

Roland Poom has said playing Colin McRae Rally on PlayStation will help him adapt to his new co-driver Darren Garrod.

Garrod will partner Estonian Poom in the European Rally Championship this season in a Citroen C3 Rally2 run by Sainteloc Racing.

Poom explained: "Last season I switched my pacenotes to English to have more co-drivers to choose from and I always thought if I am using English notes then the co-driver must be from the UK. I knew Darren so I asked about his plans and he was available so that was an easy choice.

"In the beginning of the year in Estonia when we did the Talveralli everything worked out well, it's easy with him.

"It was difficult at first with English notes when there is a lot of information coming in, but I played the Colin McRae game on my computer with English pacenotes from when I was 10 years old so it was not a big problem."

FOOTBALL MANAGER VILLAS-BOAS READY FOR RALLY PORTUGAL

Former Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur manager Andre Villas-Boas will make his WRC debut on his home round of the World championship next month.

The Portuguese, who hasn't worked in football since leaving Marseille in February, is regarded as a huge motorsport fan and has taken part on the Dakar Rally in the past.

For Rally Portugal, which is based in Matosinhos from May 20-23, the 43-year-old Villas-Boas will drive a Citroen C3 Rally2 run by top Portuguese team Sports & You, which is entering a number of drivers on the event, including team boss Jose Pedro Fontes, a two-time national champion.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, SMJ Photographic, Phil James, Kevin Money

MN entries are joined by BRC men at Oulton Park

NEIL HOWARD ORGANISERS "CLOSE TO ACCOMMODATING" ALL ENTRIES

Bumper entry for Oulton's British Rally Championship encounter

By Luke Barry

Neil Howard Stages clerk of the course Darren Spann has hailed the "incredible" number of entries the Oulton Park event has received ahead of its first appearance in the British Rally Championship later this month.

The event is traditionally the season-opener for the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship but has been postponed to May 31, owing to various Covid-19 complications. Entries for the event had already been oversubscribed, but they reopened last Thursday evening to allow the BRC contingent to take part. Every competitor that had originally entered the November rally kept their entry.

"The response was incredible," said Spann. "We took another 57 entries overnight on top of what was already in the event so there's a healthy reserve list as well. We managed to squeak a little bit more out of it, we increased the entry before we reopened to 146 cars [from 138] so there will be 32 new entries that get a run, and some of the BRC competitors had already entered."

The unseeded entry list for the event was made public on Wednesday, revealing one of the biggest BRC entries in years. While the entries are yet to be seeded, MNCRC competitor Steve Simpson will be car #1 in his Ford Fiesta R5 courtesy of his victory in 2019.

REPORT: NATIONAL RALLYING

BINNIE MAKES HIS MARK ON A SINGLE-VENUE SHOWDOWN

By Peter Scherer

Harold Palin Memorial Stages

Championship ace Michael Binnie made it a debut win as, sharing his new Mitsubishi Lancer E9 with Claire Mole, he was victorious on his first single-venue rally.

David McMullan/Marc Melhuish were the early leaders, but after their four-second lead was halved by Binnie on stage two. Binnie took charge on the next.

Initially chasing the lead duo was the Mitsubishi Lancer E7 of Julian Hope/Neil Chambers, but they had the Subaru Imprezas of Joe Cunningham/Josh Beer and Neil Roskell/John Cope soon poised to challenge for their third with all three covered by only 3s.

After three stages Binnie was 7s up, from McMullan, Cunningham, Roskell and Martin Farrar/Andy Ward's Impreza, after Hope had a rear puncture.

McMullan's rally was over when the propshaft broke at the start of stage four, leaving Binnie 12s up on Cunningham, from Roskell and Steve Pawson/Graham Wride's Impreza.

Over the final two stages Binnie's advantage became a winning margin of 20s, but, after a collision on the penultimate stage, Cunningham was stuck in fourth gear for the whole of the final run.

Roskell and Pawson completed the top three, from Scott Renshaw/Chris Bullock's Impreza, Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones's Escort and Craig/Steve Renshaw's Impreza, with Cunningham, dropping to seventh.

Binnie was successful

Results

Harold Palin Memorial Stages
Organisers: Eastwood Motor Club **When:** May 2 **Where:** Fulbeck, Lincs **Stages:** 6 **Starters:** 57
1 Michael Binnie/Claire Mole (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) 33m01s; 2 Neil Roskell/John Cope (Subaru Impreza) +20s; 3 Steve Pawson/Graham Wride (Subaru Impreza); 4 Scott Renshaw/Chris Bullock (Subaru Impreza); 5 Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 Craig Renshaw/Steve Renshaw (Subaru Impreza) 7 Joe Cunningham/Josh Beer (Subaru Impreza); 8 Jonathan Lightbody/Dane Chapman (Subaru Impreza); 9 Eddie Lewis/Dom Adams (Ford Fiesta R4); 10 Antony Ellery/Dan Tribe (Ford Escort Mk2).
Class winners: Paddy Homan/Tom Homan (Ford Puma); James Evans/Ffion Davies (Ford Fiesta R2); Lewis/Adams; Hodgson/Jones.

Bird said he was familiar with his new mount very quickly

BIRD REGISTERS FOR BRC AFTER "ENJOYABLE" RALLY2 DEBUT

Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship frontrunner Frank Bird has registered for the 2021 British Rally Championship after an "enjoyable" Ford Fiesta Rally2 debut at Snetterton.

He finished second to Rhys Yates in the second meeting of the MNCRC season in Norfolk, clinching two stage wins along the way. It came on Bird's first run in Rally2 machinery as his usual Ford Focus WRC07 he claimed victory with at Donington is currently undergoing repairs.

Bird told MN: "After 30 minutes in the car, it felt good. I'd only had a few miles to shake the car down, but I love it. It feels like a little go-kart.

"The most obvious difference [between the Rally2 and WRC] is the braking. You can brake so much later than you think."

Bird and co-driver Jack Morton indicated to Motorsport News that they were interested in more Rally2 outings.

They have entered the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park – a round of both the BRC and MNCRC – in the machine.

REPORT: SPRINT

GRAHAM SETS THE GOULD STANDARD

By Phil James

John Graham was quickest from the start at the recent Aintree Sprint, eventually powering his Gould GR55B to a stunning time of 38.96 seconds.

A change of tyres for the final two runs meant he became the only driver to set sub 40s times throughout the day.

Graham's closest challenger was Paul Tinsley in the Dallara F397.

In a close contest between a pair of Forces, Glyn Sketchley won the battle for third fastest time as the PT pilot stopped the clocks 0.3s quicker than the TA of Robert Tonge. Ian Rowlance, better known for rallying exploits in a 6R4, made his debut in a Reynard 2KF and completed the top five.

Results

Aintree Sprint
Organiser: Liverpool Motor Club. **Where:** Aintree **When:** April 24. **Starters:** 103.
1 John Graham (Gould GR55B) 38.96s; 2 Paul Tinsley (Dallara F397) +2.98s; 3 Glyn Sketchley (Force PT); 4 Robert Tonge (Force TA); 5 Ian Rowlance (Reynard 2KF); 6 Stuart Bickley (Jedi TDF); 7 Eve Whitehead; 8 Daniel Williams (Gould GR37); 9 Chris Boyd (Sylva Riot); 10 John Ison (Westfield Megabusa).

OBITUARY

Johnny Hickey 1983-2021

The Irish rallying community has been shocked and saddened by the recent sudden passing of Killarney's Johnny Hickey.

An extremely competent co-driver, the 37-year-old was pivotal within the Killarney and District Motor Club and was aptly described as their "go-to man".

He prepared and edited the Rally of the Lakes and the Killarney Historic Rally programmes – drawing on his great friendship with media personnel for content. He had a great rapport with competitors, which accelerated the submission of entries.

He was employed by Con Duggan, father of rally ace Rob and for whom he worked on the publicity side, and also aided Colin O'Donoghue and when they won the respective overall and modified sections of the 2019 Killarney Historic Rally, it was a unique and proud moment.

In his eulogy, Johnny's dad Charlie described him as "a perfectionist". National, local and social media were awash with tributes. Hickey is survived by his wife Jennifer, children Alyson, Laura, Conor and the late baby Jenelle.

YATES RETURNS TO BRC WITH M-SPORT

Yates is plotting BRC assault

M-Sport driver Rhys Yates will return to the British Rally Championship this season as he believes the series is the perfect fit for where he is in his rallying career at the moment.

Yates, again co-driven by James Morgan, was supposed to do a split programme between the BRC and WRC2 last year before coronavirus brought everything to a halt. While he admitted he could appear in the World championship later in the season, Yates's primary aim is to lift the British title in 2021.

"That is the plan, for definite," he told MN. "I want to go out and race, I want to go out and be competitive, and I don't think there's any better championship than BRC for that. They're good rallies, fast drivers and it just suits everything I'm doing at the minute."

Yates will be up against stiff competition in his Ford Fiesta Rally2, but he wouldn't have it any other way. He said: "I think there will be a good mix of people. Like I've said in the past, the guys up the front in the BRC, you put anyone in the world down Nicky Grist Stages and they'd be up there [against the visitors], the competition and pace is high."

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HISTORICS

DOWN THE WORKSHOP

LOLA T440 FF1600

Current owner: Jake Shortland

Car is a rarity in England

It is a rare car from 1977

"Most of the production run went to the US. Only one car was sold to the UK, one to Australia, one to South Africa and 10 to Canada for a racing school at Mosport Park. Lola factory driver Mike Blanchet did a handful of UK races in a development car."

Shortland and George McDonald jointly own it

"It is a very rare thing. We know that Rob Fowler, Neil's dad, had it for 10 years or more. We were looking for a cheap car to race in Classic Formula Ford and came across this and thought 'why not just give it a go and see what it's about?' We both work on race cars at Hall and Hall."

It only raced once in '20

"We got it in November 2019 and Oulton Park last August was the first race that we did. We had a few little issues and because we work in racing we've got to plan our events around other races."

It could be the only one in the UK

"It was built in 1977 and there weren't many. But from looking at the history most of them went to America. George knows someone in America who says these are the best-kept secret in Formula Ford. They're not very common here and we don't know of another one running in England. It's just nice to see a different car out there."

It has an unusual gearbox set-up

"The only unusual thing about it is how the gearbox is spaced away from the bellhousing with this adapter plate. That's just to give it a longer wheelbase. A lot of people have looked at that as it's unique. At Oulton Park, a lot of people were looking in there and saying they'd never seen anything like that. But it gives it a longer wheelbase and it's a very slippery car. So it should be a good car given time to develop it. Apart from the gearbox, it's a typical design of its age."

Shortland has a little experience

"I raced Superkarts for a few years and did a couple of races in one of Neil Fowler's Lola T200s at the Walter Hayes and Gold Cup a few years ago. But that's about it really, so not much. George McDonald co-owns it and he is going to race it as well."

Photos: Paul Lawrence

R.A.C. entries are full up already

ENTRY RUSH MEANS R.A.C. RALLY IS OVERSUBSCRIBED FOR 2021 EDITION

Level of interest has overwhelmed five-day marathon event organisers

By Paul Lawrence

The 2021 Roger Albert Clark Rally will run a capacity entry after the event organisers were swamped with demand. Some 180 applications for 135 available entries were taken within two hours of entries opening on Friday morning.

As forest rallying in the UK begins to emerge from a long shutdown, demand for places on the biennial five-day marathon reached fever pitch on Friday morning as crews clamoured to secure a place on the November 25-29 event.

With 20 places reserved for overseas entries, just 115 places were available for the UK historic and two-wheel-drive field. In the first two minutes, 60 entries were placed.

Rally manager Colin Heppenstall knew that there would be a rush for entries but said that the demand far surpassed his expectations. "We knew that a lot of people were going to be placing entries but to have this level of response is overwhelming. We will still accept applications to go on the reserve list.

"Competitors have not been able to go forest rallying since last February and this shows that there is a big demand for forest events. Because we now run every other year, it is a big occasion for competitors, service crews, marshals and spectators.

"I'm also really pleased about the business that the event is generating for the small companies that work in rallying and also the money that is going to be spent in November in hotels, guest houses, B&Bs and so on. They've all had a tough time recently, so an event like this is a real boost."

HERO-ERA entrants will be part of a new green movement

HERO-ERA organiser to go green in '21

HERO-ERA, the prominent organiser of classic rallies, is one of the first major historic motorsport organisations to become carbon neutral.

As World governments seek to significantly reduce carbon emissions, HERO-ERA is leading the way in historic motorsport and has already neutralised its 2020 carbon output. That will continue this year and beyond, even as the organisation returns to running major endurance rallies.

Working with decarbonisation specialists BeZero Carbon, the entire HERO-ERA carbon output in 2020 was calculated at 424 tonnes, a figure that even included heating the organisation's offices.

"Historic motorsport is a negligible carbon contributor," said a HERO spokesman. "But it is important that we do this."

Pre-War machines to grace the Thruxton

Thruxton Historic meeting on June 12-13 has been boosted by the addition of a race for Pre-War Sports Cars.

The schedule already features hour long, two-driver races for 1950s Sports Cars, Pre '63 GT cars and the Jaguar Classic Challenge. The Historic Touring Car Challenge has a pair of 40-minute races.

"We are delighted to announce that we are adding a race for Pre-War Sports Cars to the programme," said Duncan Wiltshire of Motor Racing Legends.

Supports include the Jochen Rindt Trophy and the HRDC Jack Sears Trophy, Allstars and Classic Alfas.

Pre-War cars will hit Thruxton

CLASSIC SPEED SERIES IS GO

The 12-round Classic Speed Championship opened at Prescott recently with a field of 30 pre-'77 saloon and sportscars and pre-'72 racing cars. Although primarily based on a handicap system, the quickest drivers in the opening round were Andy Tippett (Brabham BT30X), Josh Sadler (Porsche 911RS) and Simon Braithwaite (Ford Escort Mk1), pictured above. Five of the 12 rounds will be run at Prescott.

Hugh Price bags a Chevron B16

Chevron enthusiast Hugh Price is the proud new owner of the Chevron B16 previously owned and raced by Jamie Boot.

The car was a continuation chassis built by Vin Malkie. Former Le Mans racer Price sold his ex-Derek Warwick Chevron B38 Classic Formula 3 car in order to acquire the sports racer.

"I'll do some Thundersports races with it," said Price who previously owned and raced a Chevron B21 sportscar.

The BMW M10 engine in the B16 has a limited number of miles left on it before a routine rebuild is due, so Price will probably do one race this season before a fuller programme next year."

IN BRIEF

Tarrant honour

Fifty years after he lost his life at Thruxton, former Special Saloon racer Brian Tarrant was remembered during the Classic Sports Car Club meeting at the Hampshire track. Enthusiast Peter Hulme provided a trophy for the V8 cars in the Special Saloons race in memory of a pioneer of big-engined racing saloons. In the late 1960s, Tarrant fitted a Chevrolet V8 into an Austin A40 and achieved some notable results with the fearsome device.

Fleming's marks

Jon Fleming (Austin Ulster) was the best overall performer on the pair of Vintage Sports-Car Club Herefordshire Trials run recently. Due to the pandemic, the 120-car entry was split in half, with 60 cars competing each day. Running later in the year in dry and dusty conditions left more than 20 cars cleaning all hills and it was Fleming's best time on the timed special test that just gave him the edge.

Tonkin's return

Paul Tonkin hopes to be back racing in his Chevron B29 later this month. Following 18 months out of racing, Tonkin was planning a season in Historic F2 until the Chevron was badly damaged in an unfortunate testing shunt at Donington in March. The ex-Wheatcroft Racing car is with Dan Eagling at Lifetime Racing for a substantial rebuild and Tonkin is hoping that it will be ready for the Silverstone GP races on May 22-23.

Ross opts for a TVR

Antony Ross has joined the growing band of TVR 3000M racers in 70s Road Sports and made a successful debut at Snetterton recently, finishing fourth overall in a car originally built by former GT and touring car racer Michael Caine. Cambridge-based Ross was the Historic Road Sports champion last season in his Alfa Romeo Spider.

Wrigley's delay

Historic single-seater racer Matt Wrigley chose not to make his Historic FF2000 debut at Snetterton last month. Wrigley has a Reynard SF79 that was rebuilt by Neil Fowler and though the car is for sale, Wrigley is keen to give it at least one shakedown race. "We tested it but we had some issues and I couldn't fit comfortably in the car, so I decided not to race," said the Historic F2 racer.

FEATURE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Title favourite?: Fortec's Hedley is a late addition

BRITISH F4: MANY HAPPY RETURNS?

British F4 has a bumper grid this year and as usual it's tough to pick a favourite, as Graham Keilloh explains

British Formula 4, the traditional first UK step on the single-seater ladder, returns this weekend for its latest campaign on the British Touring Car Championship's undercard. And for 2021 things look healthy, with 17 up-and-comers on its roster, up on the 15 that started 2020 (and the 12 that ended the campaign).

"It's looking really good isn't it?," championship promoter Sam Roach tells Motorsport News. "It would be easy to have a narrative that this is Covid-related, that our country is doing better than some other countries that host rival F4 championships, but this grid was set before anybody had heard of vaccines. So this is more likely one of those years where the numbers are a little bit higher. This is some payback from a couple of good years of running."

And as usual in the British F4 class there is an eclectic mix both in nationality and racing background, with karters, Ginetta alumni and those from a few other places besides.

As usual too, picking a likely winner isn't easy. "I've got genuinely no favourites," Roach adds. "Normally by now I've got a few people in my head that I think are looking a bit tasty."

But the returnees from last year's field, with their obvious head start, seem a good place to begin. And the last to join the 17 has good claim to be our first consideration. Last week James Hedley was in with a shot, confirming his place for the first three rounds at least. Last year with JHR Developments he placed fifth in standings, and was likely ill-served by the place as he was a consistent sharp-end runner, particularly early in the campaign.

For 2021 he's back and has shifted to Fortec Motorsport that took Luke Browning to last year's drivers' title, with it becoming the first squad to beat Carlin to the prize. Plus the forthcoming opening round is at Thruxton, where Hedley just so happened to get three wins from three last season.

"I'm definitely one of the [title] favourites if not the favourite," Hedley tells MN. "It's going to be tough because everyone else has done a lot more days in the car, but we've just to rely on my skills."

He'll have a likely returnee rival for honours in former team-mate Abbi Pulling, who finished just one place behind Hedley in last year's standings. She was another ill-served by her points total. And unlike Hedley she has the benefit of continuity, remaining with JHR.

"This year it's looking really good," Pulling says, "[in] pre-season testing [I'm] finding what I want in the car. The first-year [drivers], I've made all their mistakes! I've come back as a completely different driver [this year] and I want to go for the title. The preparation is to a whole new level; this time last year I was quite ignorant, I didn't realise how much time I had to put into it. Working with Alice [Powell] made me open my eyes."

Another returner who starts among the favourites is Peru's Matias Zagazeta, who's made the audacious call of leaving powerhouse Carlin. Now he's with Argenti Motorsport, in its sophomore year after taking over from Double R. So far Zagazeta's call is working: he's been near or at the top of much of pre-season testing. Perhaps though his ability to race is in more doubt than his ability to be quick.

"Last season was very difficult but we're here to take advantage of all the experience gained," he says. "The main goal [is] the championship. I'm working four times harder than last year. I thought [Argenti] would be a great fit."

His new boss Michael Meadows adds on Zagazeta's move: "All the teams have a pretty good grip on the cars now, ultimate pace is quite similar. Sometimes just a change of scenery helps."

And of course any British F4 season preview has to detain itself, at least for a few sentences, with Carlin. It's British F4's perennial: having won the drivers' title and the teams' title in four out of the five years it's competed in the category.

Carlin has a returnee of its own in for 2021, albeit one who, like Zagaeta, has switched squads. Roman Bilinski has joined from Arden, after coming eighth in the table with three podiums last year. "[Carlin's record creates] quite a lot of pressure but I've got a really good team behind me and so I'm going to be pushing all the way," Bilinski says. "For sure the drivers from last year are going to be quick. Coming back to a second season will be really good for me."

He's joined at Carlin by Japanese karter Dougie Bolger, his fellow karter Kai Askey, and recent F4 UAE frontrunner Tasanapol Inthraphuvasak from Thailand.

The debutants are not to be ruled out though, particularly if they've had lots of testing. This was evidenced last year with Ginetta graduate Zak O'Sullivan coming within the fall of a red flag of claiming the title (see sidebar).

Alongside Hedley at Fortec there is Swede Joel Granfors – who has a particularly interesting background of having claimed closed-wheel and open-wheel Scandinavian titles last year – plus karting champion Oliver Gray.

Joining Pulling at JHR there is someone for whom, from one perspective, things can only go down. Joseph Loake won every single BRSCC Fiesta Junior race last year, and the 15-year-old is now trying his hand at single-seaters. Karting graduates Matthew Rees, also 15, and McKenzy Cresswell – British born but raised in Austin, Texas, and who has shown surprising testing form – complete JHR's selection.

Zagazeta also is joined by a couple of karting graduates: his Argenti team-mates are Australian Marcos Flack and Eduardo Coseteng, the first driver from the Philippines to compete in British F4.

Arden's driving complement is Ginetta Junior podium-finisher Zak Taylor and karting and Arden-affiliated Young Racing Driver Academy alumnus Thomas Ikin. And there are once again six competing British F4 teams this year as Richardson Racing returns, with Georgi Dimitrov, currently its sole driver, who won four races with the team in Ginetta Juniors last year.

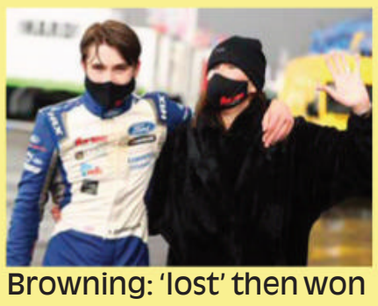
And there's another way the championship will look different in 2021, as it has its first significant weekend format change in its F4 history. The entire grid will reverse in the second race based on qualifying, rather than 50% of race one's classified finishers reversing. The move has, at this stage, universal approval from drivers, and with competitors having a couple of extra tyres per event this year it all could open up new strategy approaches.

But, as noted, it's rarely easy to predict what happens in British F4. ■

Pulling returns "completely different driver"

British F4 has attracted 17 entries for this year

Zagazeta has switched teams and chases title



Browning: 'lost' then won

A real test of nerve – 2020's dramatic British F4 title showdown

"Always happy to have a dramatic conclusion; that one was perhaps a little bit close to the bone for our own nerves!," British Formula 4 boss Sam Roach admits to MN.

British F4's 2020 title was not only decided at the very last race, and not only by a hair's breadth between Luke Browning of Fortec and Zak O'Sullivan of Carlin. Not only either was it decided with a finale stopped early amid intensifying rain. When the red flag flew the drama had only just begun.

The championship's calculations said, correctly, that Browning was champion. But O'Sullivan was celebrating in parc ferme while Browning made a solemn journey back to Brands Hatch's paddock. Neither twigged that only half points were awarded due to the early stoppage.

"You start questioning yourself!," Roach confesses of the situation. "Because the teams are all doing the same work. [You're thinking] 'why the hell are you jumping up and down? What have I missed?' There was a few minutes of frantic phone calls and frantic calculations!

"It's great for the drama of the championship and the narrative, what could be better than a finale as close and as dramatic as that? [But] a less dramatic one this year would be just fine!"

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FEATURE

KELVIN FLETCHER: RACING FEELS LIKE IT'S VERY MUCH A PART OF ME NOW

The British GT champion – and soap star and Strictly Come Dancing winner – isn't what we might assume for a celebrity in racing, as he tells Graham Keilloh

Too much of the population Kelvin Fletcher is the star of the Emmerdale soap and the winner of the BBC's hit show Strictly Come Dancing. Yet with this, to many of us motorsport aficionados, such a celebrity trying their hand at racing no doubt brings forth a few disdainful assumptions.

But we have enough evidence in Fletcher's case to know he's not participating in motorsport as a passing fancy. And his answers to Motorsport News readers' questions underline the point.

Firstly he's been competing since 2012, earning his spurs in Mighty Minis. And his skills have taken him, via the British Touring Car Championship, all the way to British GT's Pro-Am GT4 championship in 2019, driving alongside Le Mans LMP2 winner Martin Plowman in a Beechdean Aston Martin. This year he and Plowman, after a year's Covid-related hiatus, graduate to British GT's frontrunning GT3 contest in a JRM Racing Bentley.

The pair further have started their own racing team, Paddock Motorsport, which made its debut in Mazda MX-5 Supercup last year and now in 2021 has expanded to GT Cup. As we find out, Fletcher has grand plans for the squad.

We told you that he takes his racing seriously…

Question: What has been the biggest challenge in your career? What has been the most rewarding part of your career?
Sharon
Via Twitter
Kelvin Fletcher: "Two [challenges] stand out. First it's a challenge [that's] part and parcel: failure and it's how you determine what failure is. I personally like to use [the word] 'redirection'.

"You don't get that particular part [as an actor] or you don't win that particular race, whatever it is, it's a constant and that is tough to take. I remember first going for auditions as a kid for amazing parts and not getting that can be quite soul destroying, but you quickly learn to be resilient. For every 10 jobs you go for you only get one, which for most people is a pretty scary thought but as an actor it's very much what we do.

"And I can relate that to racing. There's races I've wanted to win, there's certain things I've wanted to do in certain sessions and I've not quite achieved that and it's just that constant of readapting and keeping that belief.

"Most recently was my time on Strictly because that was a very intense three or four-month period. I was completely out of my comfort zone; I was going onto a big entertainment show as the underdog. It was a huge challenge to learn something new. Could I dance? I don't know, [but] I was confident that whatever I do I can give it my all and the sense of the

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Jonathan Elsey Photography

Fletcher (l) and Plowman take '19 title

Fletcher squad made MX-5 bow

Fletcher is moving up to GT3 this year

unknown really excites me. How will I come across? How will I dance? What will my nerves be like? Will people vote for me? Will I forget the moves?

"A lot of them were not in my control. All I was in control of is rehearsing, practising, going out there and being myself, and if that meant that I danced well then I danced well, if that meant that people voted for me then great.

"But looking back that was some of the most intense work I've done for quite a few years. Just mentally, physically, away from my family, and I pushed through and I did really well, so it was a really proud moment.

"And the biggest achievements, racing-wise winning a title with Plowy [Martin Plowman] in 2019, GT4 Pro-Am title, was massive for us and we just missed out on it the year before through a mechanical failure. So the year after we did everything we could, and we came away with the goods.

"So looking forward now, I've got other aspirations I want to do this year in GT3 but with my own team as well, and I believe in everything I do: as a driver, now as a team owner, as an actor. I will fail, or come up short, but I'm resilient and that belief will put me in good stead going forward and I know that I can achieve ultimately what I feel I can achieve."

Question: Does any of the dancing training come in handy when racing? Anything you took from Strictly to racing?
Helena Hicks
Via email

KF: "It's that ability to focus mentally. There's an element of fitness there but I like to think I'm quite fit which you can reap the benefits for when racing. Especially endurance racing.

"Mentally is the one transferable skill that I managed to hone in on and pick up on, where your nerve's naturally up, your adrenaline's pumping, your heart rate's up, but you're still applying the process, applying the routine, the dance moves that you've made, applying that set of skills you've got as a driver to execute what you need to execute, whether that's the start of a race or a qualifying session, keep things simple, don't overthink anything and, especially racing, expect the unexpected.

"And just be quietly confident that you've done the work already: I've put the hours in rehearsing, I've put the hours in in testing, now is just the time of keeping calm and remaining focused and delivering, and giving it my absolute best, and thinking of nothing other than that. And then when you're looking back on your race or a dance or whatever, you make your notes, then make your adjustments and then try and take those into the next situation."

Question: How would you say your racing compares to your acting in importance? Is it 50-50?
Alexander Cameron
Via email

KF: "Everything I do is of absolute importance so it's hard to gauge what's more important. When I'm racing at a race weekend that's the most important thing, it overrides everything. When I'm acting that is the most important thing. Very rarely do you get a situation where you're juggling the two. Whatever I'm doing I just apply myself wholeheartedly.

"Racing feels like it's very much a part of me now. Yes I'm still relatively new-ish to racing, I started racing in 2012 with no experience other than as a spectator and a lover of motorsport in all forms. And the similarities as an actor [are] I started doing something as a hobby when I was a kid. I just liked doing drama and improvisations and roleplays. So something that started out as a hobby became a career.

"Same with racing, it started out as a bit of a hobby, I'd always wanted to do it, I bought a little Mini, I went racing, and now it's fantastic and I treat it like a career. I always had my doubters like in anything, because I came to racing with a spotlight, people will not want me to succeed in racing because they feel it will undermine the sport. But I've got every right to be there as the next person and my record speaks for itself. I'm very proud of my achievements so far, and my pace does speak for itself so I'm very confident. I've had some amazing opportunities and I've taken every opportunity that I've had. I've enjoyed every minute."

MN: You mentioned some people not wanting you to succeed, how did you find people within racing treated you in the early days, was there resistance to this celebrity coming in?

KF: "Yeah, there's always resistance, but I'm used to it. You're very resilient, you have to be, people because you're in the public eye they'll have already put you in a box.

"I've experienced it many times. The amount of times in a paddock, in a supermarket, people they've said 'oh you're actually really nice aren't you?' [And I say] 'Alright thank you, why wouldn't I be?' You judge on how you find people. I don't see myself as any different.

"Competitive-wise you're not going to be taken seriously, [people] thinking 'oh you're some celebrity coming in wants to do a bit of racing'. Drivers make mistakes and it's part of racing. Somebody like me does it's 'oh he's terrible'. Everything's times 10.

"But again that galvanises you, there's a resilience and that burns inside me, I think 'I'll show them'. The racing community were a little like that but in other ways as well they were very accepting and shared my ambitions and beliefs. The few that did they're very much part of my racing journey now, and [among] the others I've started to prove a lot of people wrong. [There's] my longevity in the sport, people think actually yeah he is serious about this, he does love our sport, and I absolutely love your sport, I loved it as a spectator since I was born.

"It's something that I'm still hugely honoured to be part of and the chance seems crazy. I started out, I bought my own little classic Mini and went racing at Oulton Park in a little local club championship, fast forward I was out at Castle Combe with my own team yesterday and my own articulated lorry, testing a couple of Mazda MX-5s we've got, doing a bit of tuition with one of our customers, I'm at the JRM Bentley factory tomorrow ahead of our GT3 campaign this year. I do still pinch myself.

"I'm working extremely hard behind the scenes, making all this happen. This is not gifted to me, every sponsor, every partnership, every team, every deal, I've done it myself. Yes I've had help along the way and people taking punts with me, but I'd like to think that I've paid them back. I'm now part of a little loyalty group with Paddock, with Plowman, currently with

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FEATURE

JRM and Bentley, you want to continue those relationships. And people buy people. Whether I'm dealing with a sponsor, a team or whatever it's important to build around the same sort of people who value your ideas.

"Plowy always says to me: it's the journey, it's not the destination, and that's absolutely true. We're on a very good journey at the minute and there'll be twists and turns but we're enjoying every second of it and where it takes us who knows but we're having a good time."

Question: How and when did you first get together with Martin Plowman?
Angus Kingsley
Via email
KF: "I met Martin Plowman at Silverstone when I was doing the touring cars [in 2016]. I'd signed up to do half a year, the team [was] Power Maxed, their commercial manager Ben Snowdon was managing Martin at the time. I'd never had any coaching, I was just kind of winging it. I feel like I've got a natural ability, [but] there's a lot of technical terms and understandings and you've got to be able to apply yourself. That's maybe where I was lacking.

"I was introduced to Martin and he was so lovely and straight away we just got on. A lot of drivers I'd met, [they said] first of all you need to have a driver coach apparently and then they charge what they charge and I'm thinking 'no thanks, I'll teach myself'. And Martin just had a completely different demeanour, no ego, no sense of entitlement, respected me instantly, believed in me.

"I was unaware of what he'd achieved, he's done it all: he was on the Toyota F1 programme, Indy 500, Indy Lights, he's Le Mans champion, WEC champion, he's a formidable driver.

"It was the Silverstone [national] circuit, I was three tenths off my team-mate, and you know how competitive touring cars is, he was qualifying fifth or sixth and I'm down in 18th or wherever. But I'd passed my ARDS test [only] three years prior to that, and I'd never raced the year before that because of work commitments. So I'd had a year out and I then jumped into touring cars with no budget to test, my shakedown was free practice one at the first round.

"So I was up against it, everyone telling me don't do it, everyone telling me not to sign with [team boss] Adam Weaver and Power Maxed because they're no good, well he's certainly got the last laugh now hasn't he? I sensed straight away what his ambitions were, I go off people and a feeling and I take my hat off to Adam.

"And I was alright you know [in BTCC], a second, second-and-a-half off, I think that's pretty good! Plowy took a look at my data and instantly he'd just give me a surge of belief, [he said] 'a couple of little tweaks here and there, I can tell straight away that you're a bit rusty in some areas but we can really make this work', and it was just a breath of fresh air because [in the team] I sensed that they didn't believe in me, they probably thought Adam Weaver's looking at a commercial [consideration by signing Fletcher].

"At the time I needed somebody to acknowledge that I'm very inexperienced, and actually what you're doing is terrific, your race pace to be within half a second a lap of the likes of Gordon Shedden is absolutely bloody fantastic.

"There was something about Plowy that we need to work together: you're clearly making me quicker and simplifying things but that sense that you, at your level, believe in me just really did something for my self-esteem. I believed that I had potential, but to have somebody of his calibre [agreeing], I didn't pay him, there was no money exchanged, there was no incentive for him other than just to be honest. And that was it. The relationship started from there.

"Towards the end of that year I just wanted something different. Martin, about six months later, said 'listen, I've come back to race GT cars and I'm within a team and they're looking for a driver, would you be interested?'

"And everything worked: my sponsors liked the idea, it's exciting racing as well. Commercially it made sense and as an opportunity to learn off Martin Plowman, I couldn't turn it down.

"And here we are now. I've formed a fantastic friendship with Martin, I admire him immensely as a professional. He's one of the most talented drivers I've ever come across. As a person he's just everything you'd want your son or brother or friend to be: he's very kind, he's decent. Whatever I do within racing I want it in some capacity to be alongside this guy, because I trust him and like in many industries there's not a lot of people you can trust.

"We formed a powerful and hopefully dynamic relationship that started out as successful team-mates, and now team owners, the world's our oyster.

"We're very ambitious, we make no bones about what we want to do and what we want to achieve, but everything is people. Whether it's truckies, number one mechanics, engineers or other drivers, we want them to buy into our values and share our visions and ambitions and integrity. Racing's amazing, but it's also a chance to just escape and have some fun! Yes we want to win, but your sponsors are important and your fans are important and let's really be inclusive and create a great experience.

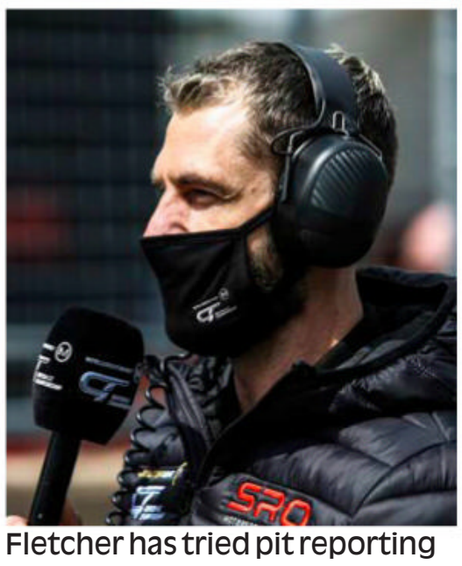
"I've been a customer of many teams, so has Martin, and we feel like all those experiences good and bad we can now create our own team and our own movement going forward. We are predominantly a race team but we've put on quite a few corporate events already and we've got a podcast launching soon and we're doing a documentary, so there's a lot of things happening. But the consistency like I say is Martin and hopefully that little pod of people will continue to grow and we can branch out from there."

Question: How did it come about that you and Martin decided to start up a team?
Lydia Tod
Via email
KF: "Yeah a little bit earlier than we anticipated but we always knew it was on the radar. Martin was thinking maybe when he retires [he'd start a team]. And [with] Covid, we decided not to race [in 2020]. If the only person smiling would have been me and Martin because we love getting in the car but no spectators could really go, no sponsors could really go, are we going to deliver on what we promise? Probably not.

"So during that time of twiddling our thumbs, [we said] 'shall we set our own team up?' And we did it! We chose the Mazdas as they're great starting [point]. I had a lot of friends, customers coming to me, and I'm like, with all due respect people just see your pound signs. If you want my advice, I came up from the bottom, where a set of tyres is £150. I think it's fantastic.

"We want to be the best GT team in the country"
Kelvin Fletcher

British GT title was racing high



Fletcher has tried pit reporting

Fletcher feels he has proved doubters his wrong with his results

"The BRSCC Mighty Minis was the championship that I first did, for a pittance, but to this day it's given me the foundations, the sense of racing, the sense of camaraderie where everyone's together and enjoying themselves, barbecues, you don't want to miss those steps out. Even if you've got the budget to go 10 levels above you can still learn your craft in that little Mini.

"So we selected the Mazdas because it's a little mini-race car, you can really hone your skills in that and you get quick in a Mazda you can be quick in other things. The other teams, they're going to lend a spanner, that sense of teamwork was fantastic and as a new team we wanted to earn our stripes and start from the bottom and work our way up and maybe even stay there as well. For me that's proper racing.

"We'll make mistakes, we'll do well, we'll learn and we've got ambitions to be the top GT team in the country, throughout Europe we want to be recognised as one of these top teams and we will be."

MN sets the scene: Kelvin's 24-year-old younger brother Brayden is a budding racing driver. He has competed in Ginettas, the Volkswagen Racing Cup and VAG Trophy, and last year raced with Paddock Motorsport in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup.
Question: What's Brayden Fletcher like behind the wheel?
Tony MacFarlane
Via email
KF: "He was always a little bit just on the ragged edge but I tested with him yesterday, at Castle Combe, and he's racing the Mazdas this year, and I was so impressed. It's the best I've ever seen him drive, watching his onboard, he's got pace to burn. [He] can't articulate or express why he's quick, it's just a feeling, so he must be a nightmare when he's speaking to his engineers. But he's just got this flair and this knack.

"[He] came into it quite late, very similar to me, [aged] 15, 16 he jumped in my old classic Mini and that was his introduction. But he's certainly one to watch. [Before] he was never really applying himself properly, whereas now he's matured. He's very committed, he's not making any silly errors and he's like an early days [Casey] Stoner or an early days [Marc] Marquez: he's really got that talent but it can all go horribly wrong quite quickly, you watch him on his onboard footage and you think 'what are you doing there you're just literally on the edge!'

"But now he's a little bit more refined and yesterday I jumped in for two laps and I just pretended that I wasn't even trying because I knew I couldn't get anywhere near him. He was mega, he's smooth and he's really growing. He's with our Paddock setting at the minute but if he keeps applying himself correctly I'm quietly confident in what he's going to achieve.

"I've got to admit I'm living my misspent youth through him, I didn't come to racing until I was 28 years old, I always think if I had started at 19 what more could I have achieved? As a 24 year old who looks about 12 I'm really excited about what the future holds for him."
MN: Has Martin been working with him as well to refine the natural talent?
KF: "Yeah Martin's good for being able to articulate and apply and structure that instinctive feeling and put it into words and understand mechanically why the car was doing that and then relaying that to the engineer, rather than it all just being in Brayden's head.

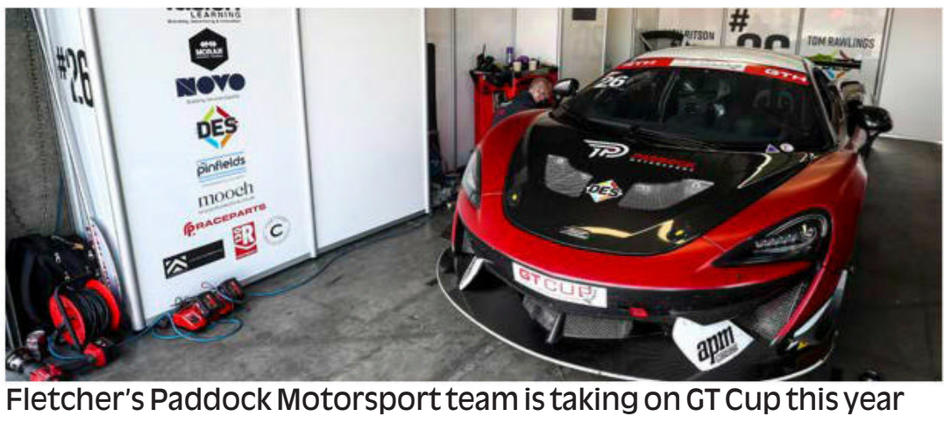
"That's where Martin's helped me as well. I'm a little bit like Brayden but over the years I've worked with race teams and engineers. Brayden's not really had that, he's had a number one mechanic and just gone out there and gone as quick as he can and he's now understanding the value that a great team and great engineers have around you."

Question: I remember when you were in BTCC you got quite a bit of attention on social media pages. How does social media affect your race preparations or do you just block these things out?
Harry Adams
Via Facebook
KF: "I don't know, I don't see it, unless someone messages me directly and very rarely will I see that because sometimes if you have quite a few followers you don't get to see everything and I have certain filters on.

"Yeah, water off a duck's back. It's a shame that people say negative things but at the same time people say very positive things and very supportive things. But a lot of these people they don't know what they're talking about, so I don't really take too much notice of what they say good or bad.

"I know when I'm good and I know when I'm bad so I make my own decisions really. But social media and certain forums, that's great for the sport isn't it? People want to chat whether it's good or bad, they're always going to do that and I don't take things personally, and I know what I have achieved and what I can do so I'm quite happy with the way things are."

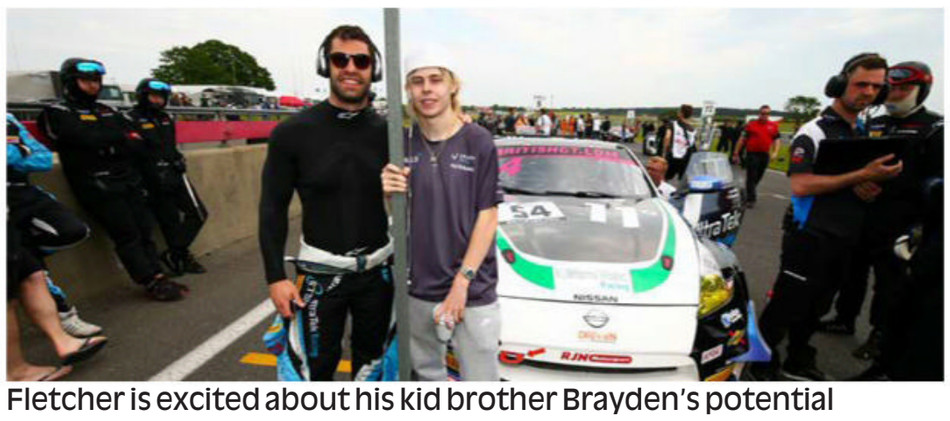
Question: Who were your racing heroes growing up?
Abbi Rodgers
Via email
KF: "I love the RS500 Cosworth so Steve Soper was a huge [hero], but I never met Steve Soper. Tim Harvey I'd say, I was starstruck when I met Tim Harvey, lovely guy as well and again really welcoming



Fletcher's Paddock Motorsport team is taking on GT Cup this year

"I've got every right to be there"

Kelvin Fletcher



Fletcher is excited about his kid brother Brayden's potential

Fletcher was 'in at deep end' in BTCC

with open arms, so respectful, with some TV amateur wanting to go racing. He treated me with the utmost respect, so I've got a lot of time for Tim. And he raced the Labatt's RS500, that's my favourite car as a kid growing up.

"Jason Plato, another one who talks the talk, walks the walk, he's been there done that, formidable driver, and again another one that treated me with such respect and again I really warmed to him. Matt Neal, Gordon Shedden, a lot of the top [BTCC] boys are absolutely fantastic.

"And John Cleland, I used to love the Cavalier as well. I met Cleland a couple of times, he's not the friendliest really, they say never meet your heroes, maybe I got him on a bad day.

"Big fan of bikes so Carl Fogarty was a bit of a hero of mine and now my heroes are Marc Marquez, Valentino Rossi. I'm massively into my bikes: MotoGP, World Superbikes.

"Thankfully the majority of the racing icons that I've had the privilege of meeting over the years have been fantastic and have been an honour to share the grid with them. Sometimes it's the young guns who are coming through with a sense of entitlement and a little bit of an ego that are the ones who are being a little bit standoffish and not as accepting. With all due respect they need to look at the proper guys who have a little bit more character and see the bigger picture."

Question: Where and what would you like to race but haven't been able to so far?
Maurice Herriot
Via email

KF: "Ferrari GT3 car. I drove the Ferrari Challenge car recently and that was a bit of a weird car. Ridiculous amounts of power and it felt a bit disproportionate to the grip and the brakes. But it was a bucket list that I was ticking because I've always loved Ferraris. I don't quite class the Challenge as the proper Ferrari race car, but to step into a GT3 Ferrari one day, maybe at Monza, maybe over in Italy drive a Ferrari GT in some prestigious race [would be great].

"Me and Martin very much want to race Bathurst. Le Mans 24 would be a pretty cool achievement. The big one offs, the Bathursts, places like that, is what really is burning at the minute. I really want to tick that box.

"The noise, the feeling, the smell of these fossil fuels, I hope that remains for as long as possible. Electric is fantastic but in many ways it's a different sport, it's like rugby union and rugby league, amazing in their own right but different. And the dawn of the electric motors now, FIA announcing the electric GT cars, just a little part of me is crumbling away with what's to come.

"So I'm very hopeful of this synthetic fuel, whether I've read that correctly or not, that it could still work within a combustion engine. The thought of driving a V12 Aston Martin, the V8 Bentley we're in this year, the Ferraris, that noise, that's what we want, that's what the spectators want, that's what drivers want. But then at the same time I had an opportunity last year to have a go in the I-Pace Trophy, the Jaguar, I'd very much love to do that. But like I say I see the two things as very separate. I would very much love to explore the electric world but for now the petrol world is still very much the one that excites me the most."

MN: On the subject of GT3 how are the preparations for British GT this year?

KF: "[It's] going very well. Before the first round we're managing to get a couple of tests in at Snetterton and Donington. We don't normally have the budget to test, which is silly because we're going up against big teams with big budgets, some teams I know have got a race budget and more as a testing budget.

"One could argue yes you're on the back foot when you don't quite have that budget, but you play with the cards you've been dealt. We tested once or twice in the Aston Martin [in 2019] and came away with the championship. We're confident in our ability and confident in the team, we're confident in the car.

"Let's not forget the Bentley, certainly this current generation, is the car that no amateur wants to drive, that teams say is undriveable. The amount of people that have told me to stay away from the Bentley. But it looks fantastic, it sounds fantastic, you look at it and think that shouldn't be on the race circuit, it looks so different but commercially that's what sells and I know that I can go on and sell on the back of that.

"And I like to do things a little bit differently and between Martin, JRM, the engineers, hopefully the SRO will give us a good fair BoP, I'm confident we can be very very competitive.

"We're excited, we can't wait to go testing, and I can't wait for that first round. Brands Hatch GP, what a circuit anyway. For fans, the best spectating opportunities there, just glorious, so hopefully that weekend in May will be some good weather and I want as many spectators to come, adhering to the current guidelines, and hopefully we can all get back to where we can embrace, hug each other, I want fans to come into the garage, young kids to sit in the car and be able to embrace them and give them a cuddle. So I can't wait for the restrictions to ease and we all get back to doing what we do best and putting on a great show for some spectators." ■

Fletcher hopes everything he does in racing will be with Plowman

People warned him off the GT3 Bentley, but Fletcher is positive

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FEATURE

BRITISH HILLCLIMBING READY TO SHOWCASE THE UK'S MOST POWERFUL RACERS

***Paul Lawrence** looks ahead to a season spent going uphill in some truly stunning machines*

Menzies has a job on his hands to retain the title

CALENDAR

The 2021 British Hillclimb Championship

RND	DATE	VENUE	WHERE
1-2	May 15-16	Loton Park	Shropshire*
3-4	May 29	Gurston Down	Wiltshire
5-6	May 30	Gurston Down	Wiltshire
7-8	June 5-6	Shelsley Walsh	Worcestershire
9-10	June 19	Doune	Stirling
11-12	June 20	Doune	Stirling
13-14	July 3	Barbon Manor	Cumbria
15-16	July 4	Harewood	Yorkshire
17-18	July 24-25	Prescott	Gloucestershire
19-20	July 31-August 1	Wiscombe Park	Devon
21-22	Aug 14-15	Shelsley Walsh	Worcestershire
23-24	Sep 4-5	Prescott	Gloucestershire
25-26	September 11	Craigantlet	Northern Ireland
27-28	September 25-26	Loton Park	Shropshire

*=the opening round will be held behind closed doors

For guaranteed spectacular action, pay attention to Will Hall...

After missing the 2020 season, the British Hillclimb Championship is set for a truly stunning campaign this year, with as many as 10 potential event winners and more than half a dozen serious title contenders.

The BHC predates every other British championship having started back in 1947, when hillclimbing was the first branch of motorsport to get reestablished after the war. It was really ahead of its time as British Formula 3, British touring cars and the British Rally Championship all came considerably later.

Over the years, the BHC has delivered outstanding action on narrow strips of asphalt at famous venues like Shelsley Walsh, Prescott and Doune in what is the ultimate test of man and machine against the clock. It is one of the few places where single-seaters are allowed to run largely free in terms of technical regulations. Current standard-setting power-to-weight ratios and 0-60mph stats are up in F1 territory.

From 1947 right through to 2019, an unbroken run of 73 years, the BHC delivered year after year until Covid brought it to a full stop last year.

Now, after a year out, hundreds of competitors are raring to go again in a sport where tenths or even hundredths of a second really count. While the headlines are taken by the fastest single-seaters, hillclimbing has classes and championships for everything from road-going production cars to classic sports and GT cars.

The 2021 BHC season will still be a little shorter than normal thanks to Covid as the annual July trip to the Channel Island hills of Bouley Bay and Val des Terres was cancelled some time ago due to ongoing concerns over travel arrangements. Meanwhile, the visit to Craigantlet in Northern Ireland has been pushed back from May until September. But all the regular mainland hills are on the schedule and the season visits Prescott, Shelsley Walsh, Loton Park, Wiscombe Park, Doune, Gurston Down, Harewood and Barbon Manor.

Each hill has its own characteristics, and each hill favours different cars from an entry that is typified by a diverse array of chassis and engine combinations. The big hitters come from the racing car classes where the over two-litre cars pack the top side of 600bhp in projectiles that weigh under 450kg, so the power-to-weight ratios are stunning. Yet, the top end of hillclimbing, where the fastest 12 return to the line for the top 12 run-offs, is not all about the big-engined cars. Heroic results in smaller-engined cars are not uncommon.

These are cars that employ launch control and traction control as well as sequential gearboxes, clever electronics and smart dampers and there's even now a tyre battle running between Pirelli and Avon. It is the purest form of competitive motorsport. There are no ballast rules, no penalties, no driver gradings and no extended pitstops. Simply, the fastest person to the top of the hill is the one who takes the glory.

Arguably, there is no other single-seater category in UK motorsport that allows such freedom of technical expression. There are no control rules here, no control chassis, no control tyres and no spec gearboxes. It is an open competition and although the times are invariably incredibly close, the leading times are achieved in very diverse ways.

There was a time when the top end of hillclimbing was dominated by former race cars. Formula 1 and Formula 2 cars in particular, and even for a while Formula 5000s, but the days when Brabhams, Marches and McLarens were the weapons of choice are long gone. Purpose-built single-seaters for the hills are smaller, nimbler, lighter and built solely for hillclimbing.

Pilbeam led the charge, with 17 titles in two decades and Gould has now won 19 of the last 22 British titles. Only the OMS of Trevor Willis has interrupted the Gould-en era of top flight hillclimbing.

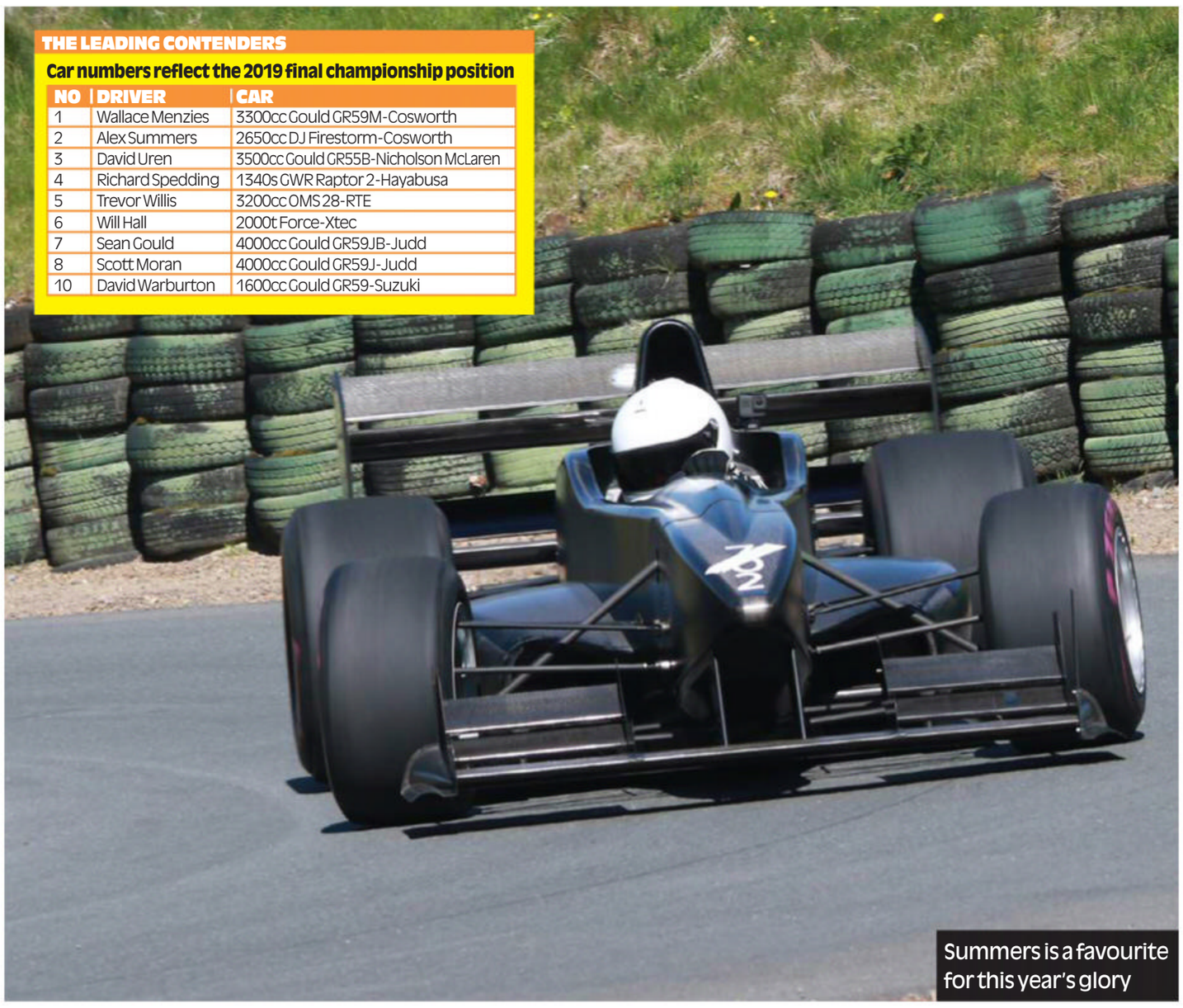
A whole industry has developed to build single-seaters for hillclimbing, right across the capacity classes and

Photos: Paul Lawrence

THE LEADING CONTENDERS

Car numbers reflect the 2019 final championship position

NO	DRIVER	CAR
1	Wallace Menzies	3300cc Gould GR59M-Cosworth
2	Alex Summers	2650cc DJ Firestorm-Cosworth
3	David Uren	3500cc Gould GR55B-Nicholson McLaren
4	Richard Spedding	1340s GWR Raptor 2-Hayabusa
5	Trevor Willis	3200cc OMS 28-RTE
6	Will Hall	2000t Force-Xtec
7	Sean Gould	4000cc Gould GR59JB-Judd
8	Scott Moran	4000cc Gould GR59J-Judd
10	David Warburton	1600cc Gould GR59-Suzuki



Summers is a favourite for this year's glory

Prescott is one of the iconic venues on the hillclimb schedule

Scott Moran has a new car to aim for a record-breaking title

Sean Gould will be out to prove a point this season

"Any one of the top 10 could win the title"

Scott Moran

Trevor Willis, in his OMS, will be aiming to use all the car's torque

there is fierce competition in the divisions at 1100cc, 1600cc and two-litres. OMS, GWR Raptor, Force, DJ and Empire Wraith are among the standard setters.

Hillclimbing is steeped in history and Shelsley Walsh is the daddy of them all having been in use since 1905. Only two World Wars have stopped the Shelsley story temporarily. Prescott dates back to the late 1930s and other hills have nearly as long a history. Bouley Bay and Craigantlet joined Prescott and Shelsley Walsh in the five-round 1947 championship alongside the Bo'ness climb in Scotland.

But Shelsley Walsh remains the place where they all want to win. The 1000-yard adrenaline rush up the side of the Teme Valley in rural Worcestershire is narrow, fast and challenging and the place just oozes history and atmosphere.

"I am trying to be as quick as the car"

Sean Gould

This year more than ever, the 13-year-old 22.58s hill record set by Martin Groves back in August 2008 is truly under attack. During two non-championship events last autumn, Alex Summers and Sean Gould both proved that the once seemingly unreachable hill record is now back within reach.

Groves' record was challenged twice in September as Summers dipped to 22.71s and Gould stopped the clock at 22.73s. Both believe they can go faster if they can string the elements of this frantic uphill dash together. Just five men are members of the sub-23s club and three of them will be back there for the BHC rounds in June and August as Scott Moran joins Summers and Gould in the bid to finally break the Groves mark.

It is Gould and Summers who are two of the pre-season favourites. Summers has fitted a 2.65-litre Cosworth Champ Car engine into his DJ Firestorm in place of a V6, and spent last year developing it in what was a part season for most people. Now he's ready to attack and his pace at Prescott recently, in the opening Midland Hillclimb Championship event, was impressive. "It is such a useable engine," said Summers, champion in 2015 when sharing Moran's Gould. "It pulls from 6000rpm to 13,000rpm and should rev to 14,500rpm. It has a massive amount of torque."

Uren: fourth year with GR55B

Gould, meanwhile, at 58 is one of the older drivers at the sharp end and is armed with the family's latest GR59 design and four-litre Judd V8 engine. He showed fantastic pace in the second half of 2019, when he set new hill records at Prescott and Loton Park, and again last year as he developed the new car. This could be his year. "It's going to be a very tight championship this year and most of them are younger than me!," he says. Gould is deadly serious about his campaign and has shed two stone over the winter. "It's just to try and get me as good as the car."

Wallace Menzies, all the way down from Alloa in Scotland, was the 2019 champion and starts this year proudly carrying number one on his Cosworth-powered Gould GR59 and he's deadly serious about retaining his title. Other contenders include Will Hall, always guaranteed to deliver spectacular action in his two-litre Xtec-engined Force. He would love nothing more than to be the first man to win the title in a two-litre turbo car, with an engine that has evolved from the MG Lola Le Mans project.

Scott Moran, meanwhile, has his own ambition to better the all-time BHC record of six-time champion Tony Marsh. Back in the 1950s and 1960s, Marsh won the title six times and when Moran won the 2016 title he equalled Marsh's record. Of course he would like to make it seven and the slightly reduced 2021 calendar helps him square business and family commitments.

Moran has parked the family Gould for the season and instead is sharing the later GR59 of Graham Wynn. He will surely be contender as he tackles a full season for the first time in four years. The Moran/Wynn package is very similar to Sean Gould's car, delivering over 600bhp in a 420kg chassis. That's a whopping 60kg less than Moran's multi title-winning car. Lack of seat time could hurt Moran in the early events but he will be a major contender. "Any of the top 10 could win it," said the Ludlow driver.

With three titles in the last decade, Trevor Willis is another key player in his OMS, which runs a 3.2-litre RTE V8 engine. That's effectively two Hayabusa engines mated together and though the package lacks the out-and-out grunt of some cars, Willis makes full use of a very effective torque curve. "It's going to be very difficult to predict who will be quickest," said the Worcestershire driver, who was on top 12-winning form at Prescott in late April.

The Gould GR55B handled by David Uren is the car that Martin Groves set the Shelsley record with in 2008, so it is a well-proven package with 600bhp on tap from its Nicholson-McLaren V8 unit. "I'm just trying to do it some justice," said Uren, who heads into his fourth full year with the car. Once again, he will share it with Nicola Menzies, wife of the reigning champion.

Richard Spedding makes up with bravado what his diminutive GWR Raptor lacks in power. The 1340cc supercharged Hayabusa engined is a phenomenal piece of kit and a blend of 450bhp and 330kg is remarkably potent. He will score heavily, even at the hills where out-and-out power is the real answer. "One of the tightest years ever," predicts Spedding.

Car and engine combinations are many and varied yet, eventually, they all end up climbing the hill within fractions of a second. The competition is ferocious and yet the atmosphere in the paddock remains friendly. These are guys that compete hard and then enjoy each other's company. It is a hallmark of hillclimbing that goes back decades and shows no sign of changing. Indeed, the 2021 British Hillclimb Championship could be one of the best yet. ■

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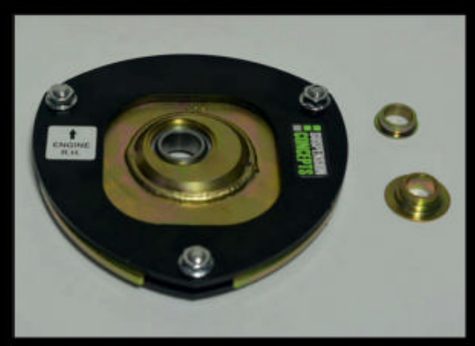

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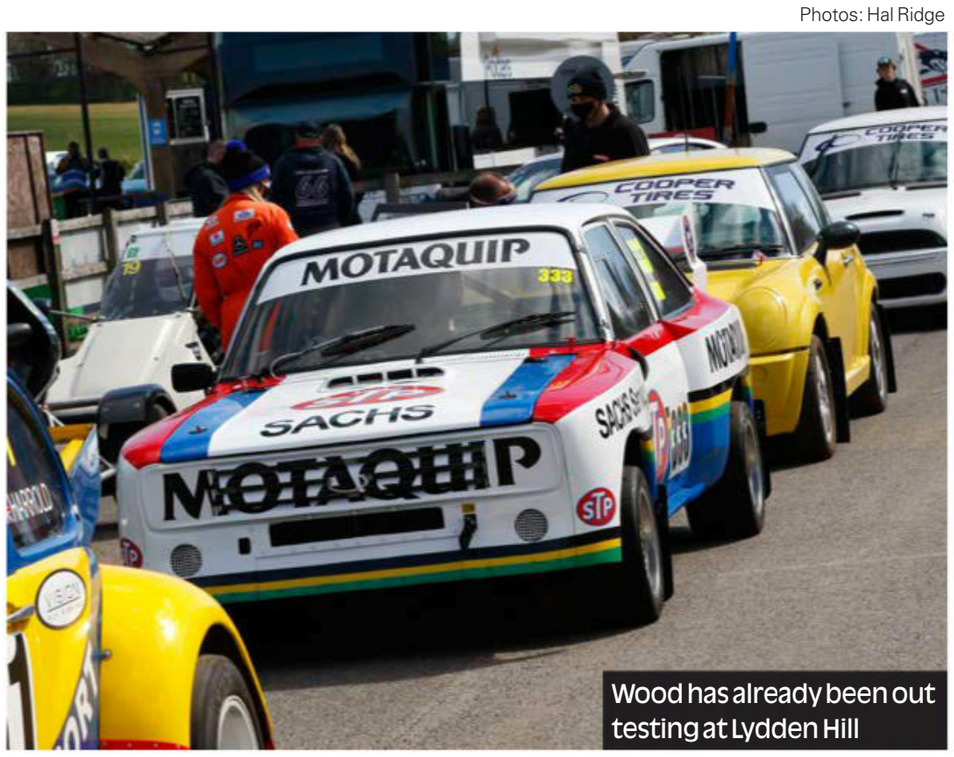
FEATURE

Photos: Hal Ridge

The former Hot Rodder Wood will tackle BTRDA



Wood has already been out testing at Lydden Hill

SPORT FOR ALL: HOW THE BTRDA HAS BUCKED THE TREND FOR 2021

Hal Ridge speaks to a decorated newcomer to the Clubmans Rallycross categories, Lee Wood

Rallycross in the UK will get underway with the opening round of the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship at Lydden Hill this weekend. But, despite the ongoing challenges surrounding the coronavirus pandemic, the series has attracted record numbers, with many new faces to the rallycross paddock.

While there are more than 30 new drivers to the discipline, some have no previous motorsport experience in their locker, others have moved from other areas of motorsport. A new entrant to the Classic category is three-time Classic Hot Rod World champion Lee Wood.

Restrictions that sidelined hopes of regular competition for Wood over the last 12 months have allowed him time to reprepare a period Ford Escort for the Classic division within the BTRDA class structure. He'll be scratching a three-decade itch to compete in the discipline.

"I've spent 20 years doing national and classic Hot Rods, I've always wanted to do rallycross, but because of my commitments to Hot Rod racing and other things I've never had the chance," Wood said. "With how things have been in the last year I've had the chance to rebuild this car into something I can use. I've been desperate to do rallycross for years."

Having raced Escorts in the Hot Rod world, Wood is no stranger to the rear-wheel-drive machines, and acquired his rallycross project from Ireland.

"I've wanted to do this since the 1980s watching at Brands Hatch in the cold and wet, and a Classic class is what I've always wanted to do. I've raced Escorts, I know my way around them reasonably well, they just look and sound right. This car was owned by the Farrell family, it's seen some action, the good bad and ugly, but it's built like a tank."

Wood gave the rebuilt car a shakedown at a Lydden Hill test day recently and is planning on a full six-round campaign in the BTRDA this year. "I've had to update and upgrade some components because it's been sat around a lot," he said. "At the moment I'm running pretty much period equipment on it as well, so it's not even on coil-overs on the front. I want to leave it as traditional as I can, but I want to get this first round [at Lydden] out of the way and upgrade from there."

But, while keen to keep the car as period as possible, Wood isn't turning up to just make up the numbers and will develop the car to take on his rivals in the eclectic Classic class, a category that embraces innovation. The division includes both front and rear-wheel-drive Ford Fiestas, twin-turbo Porsche 911s, Classic Minis, MG Maestros and Lancia Stratoses.

"I want to do well. I'm a Hot Rod racer through and through, and I will go for it," he adds. "I'm not there to look pretty, the car will be used and used properly. We're well down on power: I've got a Pinto two-litre in [the car at the moment] but we have other options for the engine.

"Hot Rod racers don't always have the best reputation, but I'm not there to cause trouble, I'm there to do well. I can't wait and I'm really excited about it."

Every circuit this year, along with racing on multiple surfaces in the same racing lap will be new to Wood, but he feels his skill set will suit rallycross well.

"I'm used to a nice flat surface, and rallycross us going to take a bit of getting used to," he says. "But my driving style is from circuits and oval racing, where you've got to be precise, you haven't got a lot of space between cars and the wall. Generally I start at the back all the time in Hot Rods, being a red, silver or gold driver and you battle your way through. This [rallycross] is slightly different with times, grids and timings but I think I can apply myself pretty well to it, I've just got to do a few rounds to get a grasp of what I'm up against. When you've spent 20 years doing one formula you know what you're up against, what to expect, but I have no idea for this and it's all good."

Another newcomer to rallycross, former autograss Class 7 racer Darren Hockly, who has also dabbled in Honda Civic circuit racing, shook down his Production -specification Citroen Saxo at the Llandow Circuit in South Wales last week.

"We just did a few laps to make sure everything did what it was supposed to do, and I was happy with how it went," Hockly told MN. "I bought a car that I thought was almost ready to race, and it's been a lot more work to get ready for the first round than I expected. But, we're pretty much there now. My hopes are to finish every race at Lydden. I'm not going to worry about positions, I just want to get time in the car to gain experience and see what else we need to do. Then there's a good gap before the second round, so we can iron out any problems we need to."

Aimed at bridging the gap between the current Production and Super Modified classes, the BTRDA series has also introduced a new 'Modified' class for this year, for front-wheel-drive vehicles up to 2050cc, with limited modifications. Former British Rally Championship competitor Chris Wheeler is amount four drivers to enter the first round for the class at Lydden Hill with a Ford Fiesta. ■

All class grids will be packed in the BTRDA categories this year

Newcomers head the BTRDA influx

With 97 drivers registered to the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship this year in the various different categories, that figure marks the biggest uptake in the series history since it began in 1977.

Series co-ordinator John Rook believes that rallycross has benefited from other disciplines not having been able to run events amid the complications brought on by the pandemic.

Rook told MN: "We've got some new rally drivers, autograss drivers and autocross drivers joining us for that reason. That's part of it, but I think the other side is still that this championship is accessible for those who want to enter in a budget entry-level formula. In the Production class this weekend at Lydden we will have eight drivers who have never competed in motorsport before, which is great."

The BTRDA series is set to run over six rounds in 2021, with visits to Blyton Park sandwiching a double-header at Pembrey, and the finale taking place at Knockhill for the third year in succession.

CALENDAR

BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross

RND	VENUE	DATE
1	Lydden Hill	May 8
2	Blyton Park	June 21
3	Pembrey	August 7
4	Pembrey	August 8
5	Blyton Park	October 3
6	Knockhill	October 24

CLASSES

BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross

- Clubman 4x4 (Supercar)
- Production 4x4
- Supermodified
- Modified
- Production
- Classic
- Junior

Autograsser Hockly will use a Citroen

"I'm not there just to look pretty: I'll race hard"

Lee Wood

Knockhill will host the season finale

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

FEATURE

OPEN SEASON FOR AN OPEN FIGHT IN THE BTCC 2021

Star names and improved hardware make this year impossible to predict, by Matt James

The boys are back in town: the tin-top crew return

CALENDAR

BTCC 2021

RNDS	DATE	TRACK
1-3	May 8-9	Thruxton, Hampshire
4-6	June 12-13	Snetterton, Norfolk
7-9	June 26-27	Brands Hatch, Kent
10-12	July 31-August 1	Oulton Park, Cheshire
13-15	August 14-15	Knockhill, Fife
16-18	August 28-29	Thruxton, Hampshire
19-21	September 18-19	Croft, North Yorkshire
22-24	September 25-26	Silverstone, Northamptonshire
25-27	October 9-10	Donington Park, Leicestershire
28-30	October 23-24	Brands Hatch GP, Kent

It is not unusual for the British Touring Car Championship to be an open book at the start of each season, but it is also not unfair to say that this year's competition, which kicks off at Thruxton this weekend, is more open than ever.

That is because, in the more recent seasons, the competition has been between two main protagonists, certainly in terms of teams. Laser Tools Racing's Infiniti Q50 and Ash Sutton led home last term in what was effectively a two-car battle over the latter rounds between him and the WSR BMW of Colin Turkington. Before that, it was WSR vs Team Dynamics when Turkington stole in to snatch a remarkable title in the very last round ahead of Dan Cammish in 2019, while WSR's Andrew Jordan was in the mix too. The year before that in 2018, it was Speedworks Motorsport, Toyota and Tom Ingram battling with Turkington for the glory.

So while the BTCC has been all about the head-to-head showdowns in its most recent history, the 2021 contest has the hallmarks of a classic before a wheel has turned in anger.

The reasons are many. Sutton will be back to defend his crown, Turkington is desperate to regain the title momentum he carried through 2018 and 2019 but perhaps the most intriguing news is the return of Gordon Shedden to the Team Dynamics fold. The Scotsman, a three-time title winner, will be at the controls of the Honda Civic Type R and he is raring to go.

But, as every with the BTCC, scratch below the surface just slightly and there are a phalanx of talents knocking hard on the door. Here. We've picked out who we think are likely to be the major contenders, but don't be shocked if there is at least one other surprise contender when the field convenes at Brands Hatch in late October to crown its champion.

HEAVYWEIGHT 1: Gordon Shedden

The big headlines are here, certainly ahead of the opening round, and the Fife flier did nothing to downplay the pre-season excitement by topping the pre-season test session at Silverstone recently.

Shedden was, for a decade, the benchmark in the BTCC in terms of outright pace. His three titles all came with Team Dynamics (2012, 2015 and 2016) before he was tempted away to the World TCR stage for 2018. But now he is back and determined to get his winning mojo rolling again.

"I don't think I am necessarily a better driver than when I left the BTCC – I don't brake 10 metres later into a corner, for example," he says. "But I am more complete in terms of the fact I know what factors I can control to help me improve my performance, and I focus on those."

The Team Dynamics Honda FK8 is a new beast for Shedden. He did drive it twice in 2020 (when testing in place of an injured Matt Neal), but he is already relishing the engineering challenge that is ahead of him. The lessons learned by the pre-season running have shown the 42-year-old Shedden that there is more to come from the Japanese car.

The FK8 was a peaky car last season – where it was quick, it was very very quick, but the on-point handling meant that there were some venues where it was not in the game. Shedden knows that his job will be to fill in the troughs and capitalise on the highs for the Type R.

His engineering experience is strong and his pace is without question. Shedden is a high-class addition to the grid and expect his overtaking flair to be on show again. He will certainly be in with the chance of a fourth title.

Shedden will get the winning mojo back

HEAVYWEIGHT 2: Ash Sutton

Even the eventual champion himself didn't know what his prospects where ahead of the 2020 campaign. Ash Sutton had joined the amalgamated Laser Tools Racing and BMR squad, but the hardware, the rear-wheel-drive Infiniti Q50, was brand new.

The car was a combination of the engineering prowess of BMR Racing and the boffins at Laser Tools Racing. They both took what they knew from an experimental half-season with Aiden Moffat at the wheel in 2019 and poured all of that knowledge into two new-build chassis. The results were spectacular, and Sutton's charge to last year's crown was a prime example of his ability to think on his feet and cope with whatever was thrown his way.

Laser Tools Racing will be run in conjunction with Team Hard this season after a commercial agreement between the two teams, but the engineering strength behind the Infiniti Q50 – including Sutton's long-term engineer Antonio Carrozza – remains unchanged for 2021.

Sutton points out that there is ground to be gained in terms of pace for the entire programme. "We started out with a car that was brand new at the beginning of 2020, and we couldn't really make any fundamental changes to it over the course of the year," explains the two-time title winner. "We were working with what we had, but now we have been able to go away and think about things and tackle any areas that we wanted to,

"The closed season has given us a chance to unlock the little things that we couldn't last year. It was a great package and we don't expect major gains but, for us, it is just about chipping away at finer details."

Sutton says small tweaks will make a big difference

Turkington wants revenge

HEAVYWEIGHT 3: Colin Turkington

After back-to-back titles in 2018 and 2019, last year was an odd one for Colin Turkington. The pre-season headlines were about him chasing a record-breaking fifth British Touring Car Championship crown, and with one round to go, he was in the boxed seat at the top of the points table.

However, in a very uncharacteristic display in the showdown at a showery Brands Hatch last November, WSR didn't get a handle on the set-up of the rear-wheel-drive BMW 330i M Sport. The Northern Irish driver was left splashing around in a car that simply would not give him the pace he needed to fend off the resurgent Ash Sutton.

One week after that painful failure, WSR was back at Brands Hatch and Turkington was putting in the hard yards to work out what had gone wrong. No stone was unturned after the nadir for WSR – which will return to operating three cars this season with Tom Oliphant and Stephen Jelley joining Turkington .

The BMW was such a strong chassis when it was first introduced in 2019 that there isn't that much more to come from the package. WSR has drilled down into the set-up and work has been done on the engine, but the car is virtually at the pinnacle of its performance.

At the pre-season test at Silverstone, Turkington worked through his development programme and didn't chase headline lap times. He ended up in sixth spot, but that is a typically low-key and panic-free position for the team and driver. It will be hard work to regain the crown given the threats from all angles but if the errors of last term can be banished, then the chances are still strong.

HEAVYWEIGHT 4: Tom Ingram

It is remarkable to realise that the ambitious Excelr8 Motorsport team – now twinned with Trade Price Cars Racing – is entering only its third season in the British Touring Car Championship's top-flight, and it has already positioned itself as one of the contenders for the title.

There are two key factors which have helped the squad into this position. The first is the Hyundai i30 Fastback N Performance. It built two of the examples and developed them throughout 2020, a season which included two podiums for the crew.

So the hardware was beginning to prove itself, but now it has taken yet another step by securing the services of previous BTCC runner-up and two-time Independents Trophy winner Tom Ingram.

Ingram has stepped away from Speedworks Motorsport, which had been his home for seven seasons, and opted to join the Hyundai programme – which will expand to four cars this year. While that, in itself, is validation for the work Excelr8 had done, it is a mark of the driver's belief in the programme too.

One of the most important factors in Ingram's switch is the continued relationship with engineer Spencer Aldridge. He will join the team in the garage as the combination chases the wins. Excelr8 will also oversee Chris Smiley's car, while Jack Butel and Rick Parfitt will handle the other two Trade Price Cars Racing-nominated versions.

This will be a seminal season for Ingram. He will no longer be part of a one-car team, so there will be a pool of data for him and Aldridge to inspect, which will help. But it will also be a mark of how complete Ingram is as a driver. Excelr8 will be looking to their new signing to lead the line, both in terms of on-track results and what happens in the workshop. Ingram, perhaps, has more pressure than he has had before, and it will be intriguing to see how the new alliance makes its mark.

Ingram has made high-profile switch to Hyundai

HEAVYWEIGHT 5: Rory Butcher

Butcher and Speedworks are ready to show thier pace on track

Among the big fanfares about team ownership changes and driver swaps over the winter, Rory Butcher's move from Motorbase Performance to Speedworks Motorsport has almost flown under the radar – and it really shouldn't.

The Speedworks Toyota Corolla, in Tom Ingram's hands, has been a seven-time race winner, while Butcher's track record over his three full seasons in the BTCC demonstrated six victories and the Independents Trophy glory in 2019.

Speedworks is an engineering-led team, and Butcher will have all the assets at his disposal this year to help him make the next step as a driver – and he will have highly experienced engineer Paul Ridgway in his corner in 2021 too.

Plus, Speedworks will expand to two Corollas this season with Sam Smelt joining Butcher in the squad. There is certainly no qualms about what is in the garage.

After a strong debut season, Speedworks ironed out some of the weaker points of the Team Toyota GB-backed Corolla ahead of 2020 and it has now won races on five of the nine tracks on the calendar. That consistent pace across the different circuits is what makes a championship campaign. With further refinement ahead of the 2021 season, the chassis will only get better too.

There might not be raised voices and a massive amount of flag waving at Speedworks Motorsport, or from Butcher himself. They prefer to do their talking on the circuit.

ENTRY LIST

BTCC 2021

NO	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR
1	Ashley Sutton	Laser Tools Racing	Infiniti Q50
2	Colin Turkington	WSR	BMW 330i M Sport
3	Tom Chilton	Ciceley Motorsport	BMW 330i M Sport
4	Sam Osborne	Motorbase Performance	Ford Focus
6	Rory Butcher	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Corolla
11	Jason Plato	Power Maxed Racing	Vauxhall Astra
12	Stephen Jelley	WSR	BMW 330i M Sport
15	Tom Oliphant	WSR	BMW 330i M Sport
16	Aiden Moffat	Laser Tools Racing	Infiniti Q50
22	Chris Smiley	Excelr8 with Trade Price	Hyundai i30 N
23	Sam Smelt	Speedworks Motorsport	Toyota Corolla
24	Jake Hill	MB Motorsport	Ford Focus
28	Nicolas Hamilton	Team Hard	Cupra R
31	Jack Goff	Team Hard	Cupra R
32	Daniel Rowbottom	Team Dynamics	Honda Civic Type R
33	Adam Morgan	Ciceley Motorsport	BMW 330i M Sport
40	Aron Taylor-Smith	Team Hard	Cupra R
41	Carl Boardley	Laser Tools Racing	Infiniti Q50
44	Andy Neate	Motorbase Performance	Ford Focus
48	Ollie Jackson	MB Motorsport	Ford Focus
52	Gordon Shedden	Team Dynamics	Honda Civic Type R
62	Rick Parfitt	ExcelR8 with Trace Price	Hyundai i30 N
66	Josh Cook	BTC Racing	Honda Civic Type R
80	Tom Ingram	Excelr8 with Trade Price	Hyundai i30 N
88	Glynn Geddie	Team Hard	Cupra R
96	Jack Butel	Excelr8 with Trace Price	Hyundai i30 N
99	Jade Edwards	BTC Racing	Honda Civic Type R
123	Daniel Lloyd	Power Maxed Racing	Vauxhall Astra
TBA	TBA	BTC Racing	Honda Civic Type R

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Altered government advice locks spectators out of Britain's tracks for another five weeks
CIRCUIT BOSSES' FURY AS FANS ARE BLOCKED UNTIL MID-MAY
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RACING REPORTS

Photos: Paul Lawrence and Mick Walker

DONINGTON PARK: MSVR BY PAUL LAWRENCE — MAY 1-2

Drake's Terrier came out top in a dogfight

Roger Wills and Tim Harvey won the Pall Mall Cup encounter

DRAKE CAPTAINS A REAL FORMULA JUNIOR THRILLER

The Donington Historic Festival returned in style with tremendous racing. The weekend wrapped up with the three-hour Pall Mall Cup and a fine win for Roger Wills and Tim Harvey in the ex-Bruce McLaren Lotus 15.

The race for the older Formula Juniors was an absolute stormer as three cars went at it hammer and tongs for the lead. Ray Mallock, Chris Drake and Andrew Hibberd were wonderfully evenly-matched in three very different cars and all had a turn in the lead.

After much place changing and wheel-to-wheel action, Mallock seemed to have made a small break when Drake was momentarily delayed by a backmarker at the Old Hairpin. But a lap or two later Mallock had the same problem and Drake sliced ahead to take the flag by a smidgen.

The race for the later Juniors lost poleman Sam Wilson and contender James Murray in a first-corner tangle. After a safety car period, it was Richard Bradley who took control of the race from Hibberd, now out in his own Lotus 22. Hibberd chased hard but couldn't quite much the pace of the Le Mans racer. Bradley ran away and hid in Sunday's race.

Gary Pearson was mighty in the Jaguar Classic opener and edged clear of a quality pack to take a resounding solo win a month after sharing a similar victory at Donington with his brother John.

Will Nuthall was the class of a bumper HGPCA field and scored a commanding win, despite a mid-race safety car. Lots of battling went on in his wake, but no-one could rival the pace of the local racer, who duly wrapped up the double on Sunday.

The opening Amon Cup for Ford GT40s race made a glorious sight and sound, even though only 11 cars started as some potential runners were hobbled by European travel restrictions. After a relatively steady start, Gordon Shedden battled ahead in the car of Philip Walker and handed it over to the equally capable Miles Griffiths to finish the job. Behind them, there were lots of battles and eventually it was the strong pairing of James Hansen and Andy Newall that came through to take second.

There was also a fine battle in the early stages of the combined Woodcote Trophy and Stirling Moss Trophy as the Tojeiro Jaguar of James Cottingham worked hard to fend off the charging Chris Ward. Ward stayed out as long as he could before handing the Lister Knobbly over to Rob Smith. But Smith, in his first race in the car, could not hold off the charging Oli Bryant in the Tojeiro as Gary Pearson, in his second solo hour-long race of the afternoon, ran home third in his Lister Jaguar.

Father and son Justin and Ben Maeers (Parker GN) emerged proud and triumphant in the Mad Jack for Pre-War Sports Cars in Dad's aero-engined monster, while Jonathan Bailey and Andy Middlehurst (Nissan Skyline) were convincing winners in the Historic Touring Car Challenge.

RACE WINNERS

Jaguar Classic Challenge
Gary Pearson (E-type)

Pre '66 Grand Prix Cars
Race 1&2: Will Nuthall (Cooper T53)

Formula Junior
Race 1: Chris Drake (Terrier MkIV)
Race 2&3: Richard Bradley (Brabham BT2)

Woodcote Trophy/ Stirling Moss Trophy
James Cottingham/Oli Bryant (Tojeiro Jaguar)

Amon Cup for Ford GT40s
Gordon Shedden/ Miles Griffiths

Pre-War Sports
Justin Maeers/Ben Maeers (Parker GN)

Historic Touring Car Challenge
Jonathan Bailey/ Andy Middlehurst (Nissan Skyline)

Pall Mall Cup
Roger Wills/ Tim Harvey (Lotus 15)

THRUXTON: CSCC BY MARCUS PYE — MAY 1-2

STURGES UNSTOPPABLE IN THRUXTON THRILLER

A Classic Sports Car Club staple since 2016, the sixth Thruxton Thriller delivered some fine racing across typically diverse grids.

Although Jamie Sturges scored another hat-trick in Seat Leon and VW Golf TCR cars, the weekend's closest finish came unexpectedly in the second Special Saloons and Modsports event, Wayne Crabtree shading Andy Southcott by 0.369 seconds.

West country legend Ian Hall (Darrian Wildcat GTR) looked set for a sixth series win at the circuit after Southcott's 2.3-litre Vauxhall-powered spaceframe Midget's differential failed. However, the retired aero engineer had no answer to determined Tom Carey, who fired his Honda CRX-BDG from the back of the grid and sailed past for his first victory at the track.

Neither made the sequel though, with low oil pressure worrying Carey and a cracked piston disappointing Hall. Despite a longer spare diff, Southcott caught Crabtree's Subaru turbo-powered Abespeed Ford RS200 clone quickly, and went ahead audaciously round the outside into the Club chicane. He clattered over the kerb, however, enabling Crabtree to retaliate and hold on for a memorable victory.

Rod Birley, on an away day in an ex-Garrie Whitaker BMW E36 M3, finished third, ahead of a fine Escort scrap in which Malcolm Harding (Mk2-BDG) just beat Jack Gadd (SHP spaceframe Mk1-Millington). Tony Paxman and Martin Reynolds in Escorts, Neil Duke's super Anglia 105E-BDG and Alan Cooper's Abarth-engined Nike Imp scrapped in their wake.

Photo: Steve Jones

Sturges (c) sets off Open Series win

The best of Sturges' wins was in the second Open Series contest in which the BMW M3s of Chris Mills, Bryan Bransom and Dominic Malone finished in his mirrors, the trio blanketed by 1.3 s.

Lotus Elan ace Paul Tooms' exemplary Classic K victory left the Marcos 1800GT of Allen Tice/Chris Conoley and Cobra of Peter Thompson/ Charlie Allison wheezing. Ollie Streek (Mini Cooper S) finished fourth after a stunning early scrap with Nick Swift which doubtless taught him a lot.

Morgan Plus 8 pilot Bill Lancashire's narrow Future Classics success over his old TVR Tuscan Challenge car, driven well by Aston and Tony Blake, was another cracker. Oliver Reuben also scored for TVR, running away with the Swinging Sixties race in which the top three were penalised for various misdemeanours.

Jack Layton, Dave Griffin and Charlie Newton-Darby scored in BMW products. Pitstop tactics helped Tim Davis (Magnificent Sevens) and Andrew Windmill (Tin Tops) to wins that were considerably more straight-forward than anticipated.

RACE WINNERS

Open Series
Race 1: Jack Layton (BMW E46 M3)
Race 2: Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon TCR)

Turbo Tin Tops
Charlie Newton-Darby (BMW Mini Cooper S R53)

Slicks Series
Jamie Sturges (VW Golf TCR)

Magnificent Sevens
Tim Davis (Caterham R400)

Modern Classics
Dave Griffin (BMW E36 M3)

New Millennium
Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon TCR)

Special Saloons and Modsports
Race 1: Thomas Carey (Honda CRX-BDG)
Race 2: Wayne Crabtree (Ford RS200-Subaru)

Swinging Sixties
Oliver Reuben (TVR Griffith)

Future Classics
Bill Lancashire (Morgan +8)

Tin Tops
Andrew Windmill (Honda Civic Type R)

Classic K
Paul Tooms (Lotus Elan)

MALLORY PARK: BARC BY IAN SOWMAN — MAY 1

McDERMID TAKES A TRIO IN HIS ZR AS MG OWNERS' CLUB GETS GOING AT MALLORY

Steve McDermid scored a victory treble as the MG Owners' Club Championship got underway at Mallory Park on Saturday.

The Buckingham driver was initially chased by David Mellor in a similar ZR, but the latter got onto the grass exiting Gerard's Bend on lap two and dropped to fourth place. Mellor made short work of his recovery and dived inside McDermid for the lead at the Esses on lap seven, only to grind to a halt at the hairpin. With Steve Darbey also retiring, only Jack Woodcock survived to give chase. McDermid was largely unchallenged in the remaining races.

In the MGF class, Simon Kendrick fended off Mark Baker in the opener but Baker had it largely his own way later on, while David Amphlett bounced back with two wins among the MGBs after Malcolm Hill struck first.

Reece Jones impressed with two Pickup Truck wins on the mile oval, the first of which was secured by passing reigning champion George Turiccki at turn three two laps from the end. Dean Tompkins, who led race one for a while, gained second in race two after Daniel Petters faded after a late restart.

Jon Woolfitt took both Northern Saloon and Sports Car victories in his Spire GTR, but he had an epic battle with brother Paul's bike-engined Lotus Exige in the first race as they battled through varied traffic. Paul's car faded in race two, promoting David Brewis in his recently acquired Elise.

The Northern and Super Classic FF1600 season got underway with two dominant wins from Joey Foster in his Firman. Jack Wolfenden's version was best of the rest in both races, but in the second he had to overhaul Ben Tinkler's Ray after a slow start.

RACE WINNERS

Pickup Truck Racing Championship
Races 1&2: Reece Jones

Northern & Super Classic FF1600 Championship
Races 1&2: Joey Foster (Firman 2001)

Northern Saloon & Sports Car Championship
Races 1&2: Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR)

MGOC Championship
Races 1, 2&3: Steve McDermid (ZR 170)

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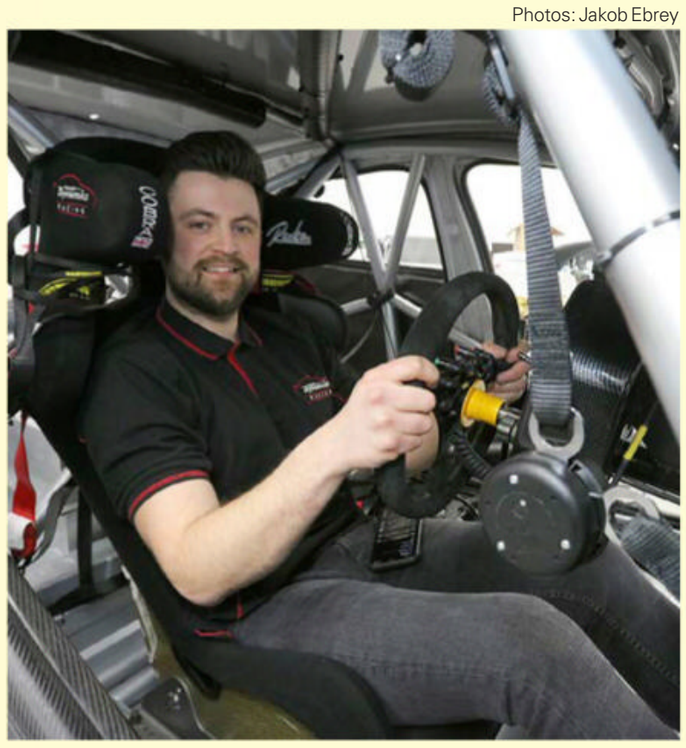
COLUMNIST

DANIEL ROWBOTTOM

Team Dynamics's new recruit is chomping at the bit for his BTCC return

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Rowbottom has raised his targets



Cataclean man is settling into his new cockpit

The moment of truth has arrived. This weekend, after a year away from the British Touring Car Championship, I will be making a return and I will be joining the hugely successful Team Dynamics squad at the wheel of the Halfords Racing with Cataclean Honda Civic Type R.

I will be team-mate to three-time champion Gordon Shedden and will have BTCC legend Matt Neal as my driver mentor. No pressure there, then!

Settling into Team Dynamics has been an easy transition. I am local to the team, so the guys and girls there are probably fed up with me popping into the workshop all the time – it is only eight miles from my house, so it has become a second home to me.

Fitting in wasn't a problem and it has allowed me to learn all about my new weapon for the 2021 season, the Honda Civic Type R FK8. The whole course of getting to grips with a new car starts with the seat fitting – which is actually a fairly lengthy process because you want to make sure you are nice and comfortable. I was taken through all the systems on the car and there are some differences from the BTCC machines I have driven before.

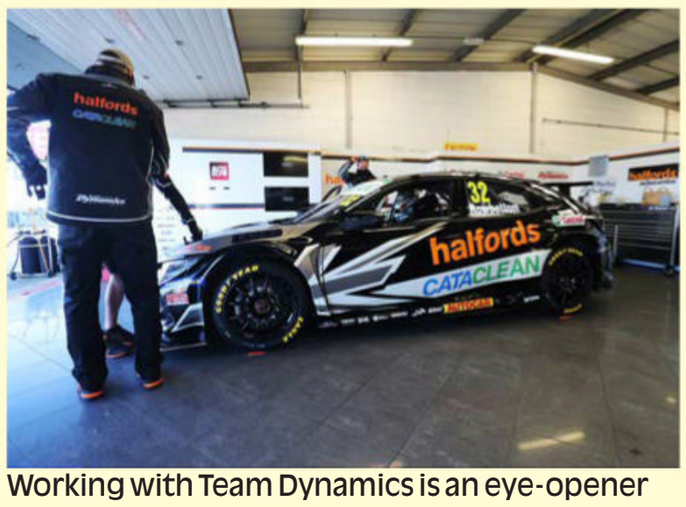
You learn what is in the car and what does what just to make sure that everything is as you need it. The team asked if I wanted different buttons on the steering wheel moved, but I told them no, I just wanted to get on with it as it was. I wanted to adapt around what was there already. Team Dynamics is full of experienced people so dealing with a rookie to the team like me wasn't too much of a problem for them.

A few days before we did our first test session at Snetterton, we went to the MIRA test track for a shakedown. We went through the systems again and I made sure I was familiar with the way the car works, but the adaptation has been an easy process.

I have had plenty of data and onboard footage to go through too, which has been given to me by Team Dynamics. It is nice, because I have been able to watch what [previous drivers] Dan Cammish and Matt Neal were doing in the FK8 last year. I can see where they brake, where they turn in and what gear they are using. That means when I went to the tests I had some subconscious knowledge of what I was supposed to be doing.

We have done seven days in the car ahead of the new season, so that is a substantial test programme. Immediately, I could tell that the Honda was a huge step forward from anything I have driven before.

One of the biggest things I noticed was that the chassis is so reactive to changes. It is so well developed within its own performance envelope that it doesn't take a drastic amount of time to resolve any issues you have. With other cars I have driven, you can make huge changes and hardly feel a thing on track. You can change X, Y or Z on the Civic and the result is either better or worse. There are no grey areas – and that hasn't always been the case for me in the past. I can't tell you how happy that makes me.



Working with Team Dynamics is an eye-opener

We are kicking off at Thruxton this weekend and yes, historically, it has been a great track for the FK8 but I am still on a journey. I have watched some of the onboards from the FK8 from there and I can confirm it does look very, *very* fast! There are corners that are flat out in the Honda that I have never been around flat out before, so that will be a test of how brave I feel…

I am going to work myself into it. The last two or three days of our test sessions have been really positive. Towards the end of the programme, I was able to set lap times which would put me near the front – and that is something I have not had before. I am feeling quietly confident, but I don't want to over-egg it.

I have readjusted my expectations a little. I found a pace in the car that I think can put me at the sharp end. Initially, I thought I would be in the higher midfield, but now I have set my sights a little bit further up and, as a team, we are in a very good place. My new team-mate Gordon has been incredibly fast everywhere we have gone to test and everyone is upbeat. I just need to make sure I take my brave pills ahead of this weekend.

I am just determined to play my part for the team, learn as much as I can, get the best results I can and, most of all, enjoy the experience. That's what motorsport is all about.

"Some corners are flat in the Honda that I have never been flat out at before"

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

A celebrity race is a frequent feature at the famous Silverstone Classic historic gathering. And the 2012 version, for Morgans, was special to our readers' Q&A guest this week, British GT champion Kelvin Fletcher. Contrary to some belief it wasn't Fletcher's very first motor race, but it was one of his first. And he won, beating the likes of Brian Johnson and Jay Kay.

And Morgan Motor Company's YouTube channel has an account of this celebrity event, that you can watch at: youtube.com/watch?v=4Hq3eMPqjgM or from searching 'Morgan Celebrity Charity Race - Silverstone Classic 2012 EXCLUSIVE!'

The video focuses on capturing the atmosphere rather than offering much account of the race itself, but YouTube can also help supplement our understanding, in audio form. In a separate video Fletcher talks to another from the celebrity race, Dave Vitty (better known as 'Comedy Dave' to the Chris Moyles fans among you) and Jason Plato in the 'Fuelling Around' podcast.

Fletcher talks about the race, how he got onto its grid, plus is illuminating about his first steps in racing for himself

Celebrity ace: Fletcher

in a Mini that year. This is at: youtube.com/watch?v=Imxo-7uWnbQ or from searching 'Kelvin Fletcher's racing debut STUNS presenter Dave Vitty!'

Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

The racing action on TV comes thick and fast with a another busy weekend, and again it's led by Formula 1 action, this time the Spanish Grand Prix from the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya.

Sky Sports F1 once again offers us a treat in advance with some retro Spanish GP action, aided by some convenient anniversaries. First we have Gilles Villeneuve's extraordinary rear-guard at Jarama in 1981, shown today (Thursday) at 2000hrs-2030hrs. Then as we creep into tomorrow, at 0015hrs-0100hrs, there are highlights of 1991's Spanish race, the first at the Barcelona track, and best known for Nigel Mansell and Ayrton Senna's iconic battle.

Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4 have their usual F1 weekend coverage. The former kicks off with the drivers press conference live this

Extraordinary win: GV in '81

afternoon at 1400hrs-1635hrs followed by the weekend-previewing F1 Show at 1700hrs-1800hrs. C4's qualifying highlights are at 1830hrs-2000hrs on Saturday and its race highlights are 1830hrs-2100hrs on Sunday.

Next Wednesday meanwhile ITV4's World of Sport programme promises a fleeting delve into ITV's motorsport archives, including 'a look back at James Hunt, Barry Sheene and a spectacular crash by Kelvin Burt'. This is shown at 1600hrs-1620hrs.

Graham Keilloh

LIVE TV

FORMULA 1 PORTUGUESE GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT DE BARCELONA-CATALUNYA

Practice 1: Friday, 1000hrs-1145hrs, Sky Sports F1
Practice 2: Friday, 1345hrs-1530hrs, Sky Sports F1
Practice 3: Saturday, 1045hrs-1210hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Saturday, 1300hrs-1530hrs, Sky Sports F1
Race: Sunday, 1230hrs-1700hrs, Sky Sports F1

FIA FORMULA 3 CIRCUIT DE BARCELONA-CATALUNYA

Practice: Friday, 0900hrs-1000hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Friday, 1250hrs-1330hrs, Sky Sports F1
Sprint race 1: Saturday, 0925hrs-1025hrs, Sky Sports F1
Sprint race 2: Saturday, 1530hrs-1635hrs, Sky Sports F1
Feature race: Sunday, 0940hrs-1030hrs, Sky Sports F1

FORMULA E MONTE CARLO

Qualifying: Saturday, 1045hrs-1220hrs, Eurosport 2
Race: Saturday, 1430hrs-1630hrs, Eurosport 2

BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP AND SUPPORTS THRUXTON

Races 1, 2 and 3: Sunday, 1050hrs-1815hrs, ITV4

NASCAR DARLINGTON

Race: Sunday, 2030hrs-0030hrs, Premier Sports 2

V8 SUPERCARS TAILEM BEND

Race 1: Saturday, 0800hrs-0930hrs, BT Sport/ESPN
Race 2: Sunday, 0330hrs-0500hrs, BT Sport 3
Race 3: Sunday, 0700hrs-0830hrs, BT Sport 3

LISTINGS

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

Thruxton, Hants
BTCC meeting: BTCC, F4, Ginetta Junior, Ginetta GT5, Porsche Sprint, Mini Challenge **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1410hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1050hrs **NO SPECTATORS**

Snetterton, Norfolk
BARC meeting: Britcar, Britcar Trophy, Hyundai Coupe, Caterham Graduates, Junior Saloons, Mini Seven, Mini Miglia, Superkarts **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1340hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0900hrs **NO SPECTATORS**

Brands Hatch, Kent
MSVR meeting: Monoposto, Radical Challenge, Radical SR1, Sports 2000, MSVR SuperCup, MSVR All-Comers, Production Golf and BMW, Racing Saloons, Z Cars and New Generation Production BMW, Bernie's Sports Racing and V8s, CALM All Porsche, Super Saloons, Tin Tops **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1225hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1210hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **NO SPECTATORS**

Donington Park, Leics
BRSCC meeting: FF1600, Fun Cup, Caterham 310R, Caterham 270R, Caterham Roadsport, Modified Ford, CityCar Cup, AMOC GT Challenge/Aston Martin GT4/AMOC Inter Marque, Jack Fairman and Innes Ireland Cup **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1235hrs (qualifying from 0905hrs) Sunday, racing from 1055hrs (qualifying from 0910hrs) **NO SPECTATORS**

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK

Upcoming Q&A star Tom Kristensen, by David Harbey

A classic Ferrari, sent in by Rich Cranston

Graham Lomax's shot from Oulton 1983

Neil Ormston was at DTM at Donington

LMP2 monster at Brands, by Gary Hill

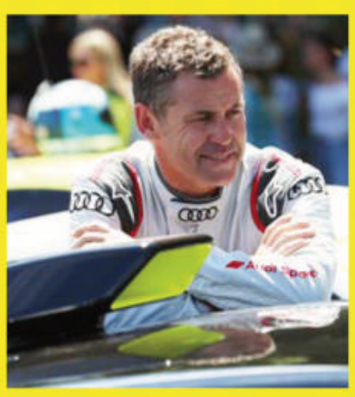
NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, MAY 13

*Correct at time of going to press

READERS' Q&A:

MR LE MANS SPEAKS TO MN

Tom Kristensen tackles the Motorsport News readers' questions



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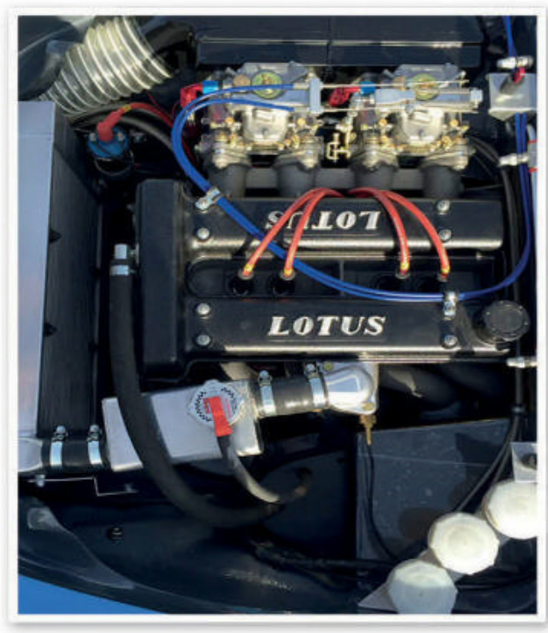

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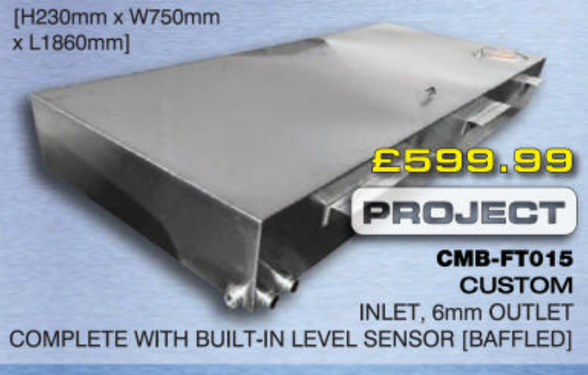

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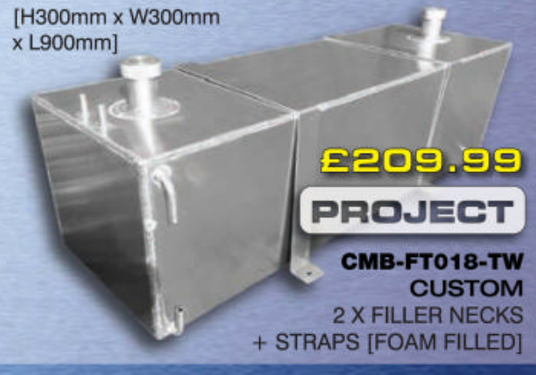

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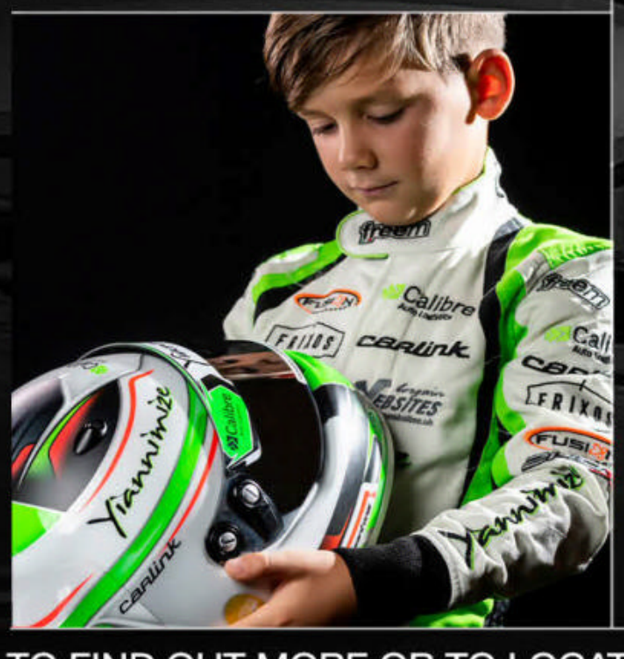

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